



11-13 June 2010

The sun sets on another crowd of happy campers and, maybe, the odd yachtie.

How to sail to the Isle of Wight festival



About the Author
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Festival fun and lots of pink.

A trip up the Medina from 11-13 June could be one you'll never forget – as **Duncan Wells** found out last year. Here's how and when to make a safe passage to a noisy destination.

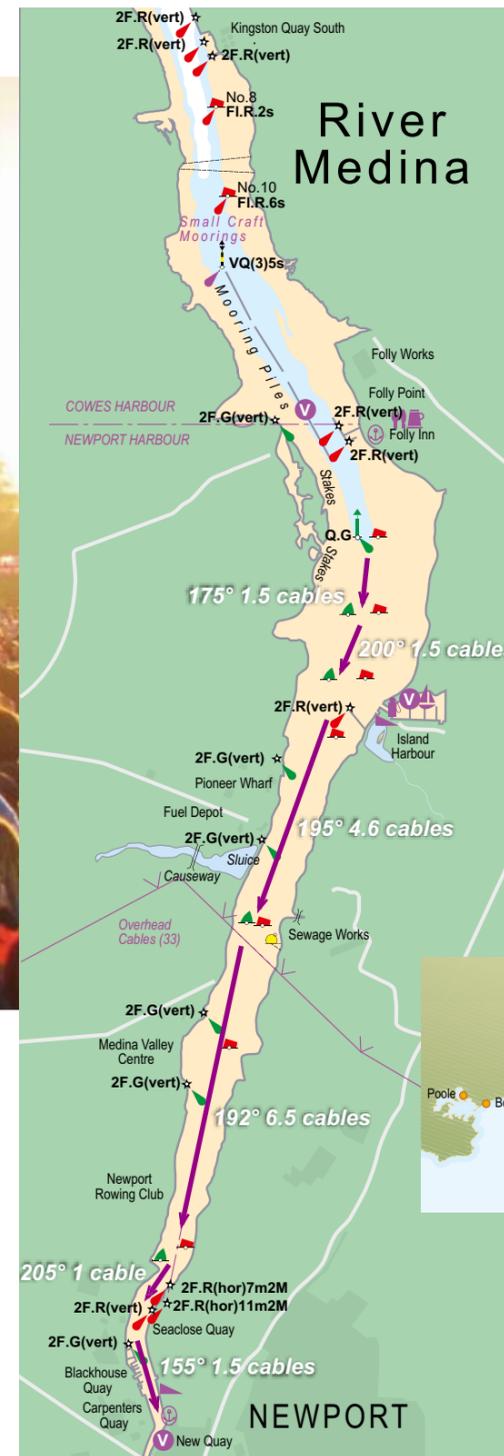
A friend offered me the unique opportunity of a ticket to the Isle of Wight festival – The Ting Tings, White Lies, Basement Jaxx, Maximo Park, heard of any of them? No, nor had I, well only vaguely – in return for providing accommodation and transport aboard *Dorothy Lee* for him, his girlfriend and another couple for the weekend. I didn't know how to spell 'The Prodigy' then, but I do now and I prefer 'Pendulum'.

Navigating up the drying Medina would be fun. We discovered when we got there that many people find it daunting and worry that it dries from just south of the Folly Inn up to Newport, so the select few have the harbour to themselves. In fact

the river is very navigable indeed. All you need to know is the height of tide. Take away the drying height and if you have enough water to allow for your draught and a little clearance you can pass safely. When the sum of the height of tide less the drying height equals your draught you will be aground. Not difficult.

Newport harbour dries 1.4m, but the last stretch between Odessa Boatyard and the harbour dries 1.6m. The drying section of the Medina starts from the South Folly SHM (Q.G.) and runs for about 1.7 miles to Newport.

As part of the preparation, I checked the bearings and distances between all the starboard



Plan your trip 11-13 June 2010

2.17 COWES/RIVER MEDINA
Isle of Wight 50°46'08N 01°17'95W
CHARTS AC 5600, 2036, 2793; Imray C3, C15; Stanfords 11, 24, 25.
TIDES +0029 Dover; ML 2.7
Standard Port PORTSMOUTH (←)

Times	High Water	Low Water	MHWS	MHWN	MLWN	MLWS
	0000	0600	0500	1100	4.7	3.8
	1200	1800	1700	2300	1.9	0.8

Differences COWES
-0015 +0015 0000 -0020 -0.5 -0.3 -0.1 0.0

FOLLY INN
-0015 +0015 0000 -0020 -0.6 -0.4 -0.1 +0.2

NEWPORT
No data No data -0.6 -0.4 +0.1 +0.8

NOTE: Double HWs occur at or near sp. At other times there is a stand of about 2 hrs. Times are for the middle of the stand. See 2.7.

ARRIVING WITH THE TIDES

With the Festival starting on Friday you will want to be 'on the wall' in Newport harbour on Thursday and you will need to have reserved your space with the Newport Harbourmaster. To allow for 1.7m draught, the drying height of 1.6m and 200mm clearance, we will require a height of tide of 3.5m. We will get this at the following times:

Thursday, 10 June between 0946 and 1150BST and between 2244 and 0140BST. I would always want to arrive on a rising tide if I am about to encounter drying heights and so would set off from the Folly at 0800 for an early morning arrival or at 2200 for an evening arrival.

Leaving the Festival, the tides are kind to us this year. Last year we had to leave before the end, but this year we will have our 3.5m of tide from 2343 to 0330BST, so I would set off at 2343, which is an hour and a half before HW during which a further 0.6m of tide will be added to my 3.5m figure. When leaving, make sure you stick to the main channel, especially by Seaclose Park and the stage where all the other boats will be moored,

although they may have left by the time you get there. Going off piste is dangerous as we know to our cost. It did our nerves no end of harm. This is only a guide and is not to be relied on or used for navigation or whatever the caveat is that they make us sign each time we turn on the GPS. My caveat is that if you're not confident with the tidal maths here, you should probably have a bilge keeler anyway.



hand markers just in case we lost visibility (See chart above).

There are four SHMs, none of which is numbered, and then the leading line and lights on 192°T (2 F.R. Horizontal sets of lights above each other) on the east side of the river. The Almanac says that we should use the LW time and height differences for Cowes and the HW height differences for Newport. With a maximum drying height of 1.6m by Odessa boatyard and a draught of 1.7m we would need a little more than 1.7 + 1.6 = 3.3m of tide to get in to the harbour. I suggested we would need a minimum of 3.5m

– 200mm clearance isn't much, but I figured it would be enough.

TIMING IT RIGHT

The harbour master had reserved a spot on the harbour wall specially for us and we would need to be there on Thursday afternoon to claim it. Working on the assumption that 'if I am going to run aground I want it to be on a rising tide', I needed to arrive at Newport just ahead of HW. This was going to be an interesting secondary port calculation.

From the tidal curve I found I would have



From top: The Folly Inn. The start of the four SHMs. Newport Rowing Club where the speed limit drops to 4kn.

FESTIVAL TICKETS

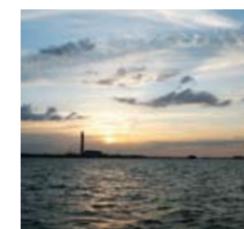
Buy online at: www.isleofwightfestival.com

Ticket Hotline:
08444 99 99 55

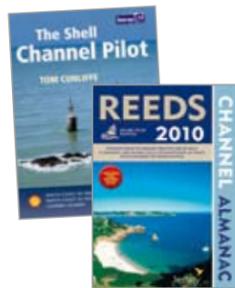
Ticket prices

Adult Camping	£150
Adult Non-Camping	£130
Child (7-12 years)	
Camping	£75
Child (7-12 years) Non-Camping	£65
Child (6 and under)	Free

All children 6 years old and under on 11 June 2010 can go free of charge, but must still be included in your booking in order to receive a wristband.



The homing signal that is Fawley chimney.



CHARTS AND PILOTS

Admiralty 2793, SC5600
C3 Isle of Wight
1:52,500 WGS 84
By Imray
Shell Channel Pilot
Reeds 2010 Channel Almanac, available online at www.acblack.com/nautical



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Pole position and well secured.



From top: A line from a ring on the quay to the mast held us in place. A careful eye on the depth, it would go down to 0.1 under the keel. The Medina full of water.

my required 3.5m from 1359 to 1529BST. The tide would rise to 3.7m (400mm clearance) by 1429 and then start dropping, so I had 40 mins to cover the 1.7 miles from the Folly to Newport. I didn't think it would take us more than 25 minutes in all. As we entered the drying section I radioed the harbour master and he told us they had 8ft of water in the harbour – the tide gauge is still in imperial in Newport. So 2.46m depth of water in the harbour, then. We stuck to the speed limit – 6kn from the Folly up and until the Newport Rowing Club where it drops to 4kn. In fact, as we neared Newport and the depth reduced and I saw the sounder readout go ...0.3...0.2...0.1... I slowed right down.

We did have 0.0 at one point, but must have just skimmed the mud for a moment. The deep water is to the west of the channel. We saw *Bladerunner Two* complete with wind turbine blades on her way to Southampton for shipping overseas. We also followed the Newport paddle steamship, which hooted merrily.

Our space against the wall was waiting for us in Newport and we berthed behind a Hallberg Rassy 312. The harbour master gave us a fender board to hang from our stanchions. A line from a ring on the quay to the mast would hold us straight and as there is very little distance to drop before a 1.7m

draught boat is aground, there was no need to adjust the line. We then had all the usual bow, stern and spring lines.

And so *Dorothy Lee* spent the next three days aground for six hours or so out of every 12 and never had more than 0.6m under keel clearance. With the mast tied to the dock we always grounded fairly upright, although we were bow down a few degrees, because the forward part of our keel dipped into the groove in the mud made by the resident vessel, which had been moved for the duration. You had the choice of blood rushing to the head or blood draining from the head for the greater part of the night. I was a 'rusher', everyone else was a 'drainer'. The owner of the HR312 ahead was a doctor, as was my friend's girlfriend and the friend that she brought along as well, so with three doctors and a nurse (wife of the doctor on the 312) we couldn't go wrong. All we needed was a Care Assistant to do any cleaning up that might be required, which obviously the doctors and nurse wouldn't touch.

We were right opposite the shower block, so very handy for all the facilities. I don't know what the ladies' was like, but the men's was not great. There was a yellow 'A' board sign in the middle of the wet floor by the showers that said 'cleaning

in progress'. I think it had been put there during the early 1960s and left. I didn't see any evidence of cleaning. The dust was certainly vintage, but then at £42 for three nights for a 35ft boat, with water and electricity, in the centre of Newport on Festival weekend, one could hardly complain if the facilities weren't quite Claridges.

A SPLASH OF COLOUR

As a newcomer to the Festival I was amazed that it was such a family affair. It involves much dressing up, for which we were woefully unprepared, unless donning a pair of shorts counts? The 312 went for dayglo pink and yellow and big fluffy wigs and big pink ear defenders for the nine week old baby who we named 'Mona Lot' on account of her propensity to... well, she was premature and frankly I think she was rather fed up with this 'world' thing and would rather have been back in the warm and cosy. Mum looked relieved though. The catamaran astern chose to be pirates. Not especially original, but very effective and colourful. The sense of fellowship from all those moored along the harbour wall or the pontoon was wonderful and a community quickly established itself.

We needed to move *Dorothy Lee* on Sunday before the end of the concert, because we would only have water – 3.5m of tide – from 1510 until 1710, so spot on 1600 we left the dock by springing the stern out – a perfect manoeuvre, which was handy considering the crowd we had, boaters and non. At this point the ferry berthing master was just leaving the harbour having dropped some people off and so we followed him out. I knew where I was going and we kept a careful eye on the depth. At the narrow bit where depth is critical, which is right by Seaclose Park and which affords a free of charge ringside seat of the stage, there were motorboats anchored four abreast across the deep part of the channel, listening to the concert. Simple Minds were on and it sounded brilliant, what a pity we were leaving. I called to the berthing master just ahead and asked if he could guide us through and show us where the water would be, because the motorboats were in the bit we wanted. Needless to say, moments after the berthing master gestured us to follow, we were aground. There is no deep water outside the channel. It took four RIBs on our bow, the berthing master and his dory pushing us amidships, a RIB pulling on our spinnaker halyard, along with a host of willing motorboaters, who clambered aboard *Dorothy Lee* and then stood on the end of the boom to help heel the boat, and half an hour before we got off. A great cheer went up from the boaters and then a huge roar from the bank and the assembled crowd who found us for some reason a more entertaining spectacle than Simple Minds. I was relieved. I really thought we would be spending the night

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there. During the drama with advice coming in from all quarters, someone from another yacht warned me not to allow these people to climb all over *Dorothy Lee*, because they might do some damage, but these were willing helpers and I was grateful. They did no harm.

Having come off the mud after what would henceforth be termed our 'successful calibration of the depth sounder' – it does read 0.0m when one is aground – we had to find water to get out. I came very close to the motorboats. Close enough for them to hang off the foredeck and side deck in anticipation of a friendly 'fend off', which thank goodness wasn't necessary, and we made our way very gently out of there. If only other people knew how close any perfectly executed manoeuvre is to disaster, the game would be up.

Earlier in the weekend I had been congratulated on my control when docking at Newport. I hadn't the heart to tell the fan that actually the wind was just blowing us gently onto the dock and I had lost control some time before. That it was gentle and looked perfect had nothing to do with me. Much the same for our skilful avoidance of the motorboats as we went off down river.

We berthed at the Folly Inn pontoon, courtesy of the berthing master – he didn't ask for a fee – and then went back up to Newport by RIB to see the end of the Simple Minds show. After the concert we made our way back to *Dorothy Lee* and then across the Solent for a perfect arrival at Swanwick, thank goodness. On reflection it might have been an idea to have left Newport on a rising tide as opposed to at the top of the tide, but it didn't make any difference with our grounding and getting off. Had we adhered to the mud for another 40 minutes it might have.

Quite a weekend. I now know what a 'mosh pit' is – the crowd who are closest to the stage – and I also know that the fine spray that fills the air as revellers chuck their drinks over the crowd ahead isn't always beer. As with all these events they are quite an assault on the audience. I am now ready for a good rest.

Then, to top it all, I am standing in a field in Newport, Isle of Wight, down by the front of the stage, waiting for a band to come on: we don't have a programme, so we ask this very fine curly haired chap beside us: "Do you know who is on next by any chance?"

"Pendulum," he says in a French accent. No article, definite or indefinite, apparently, just Pendulum. Asked where he comes from he says, Normandy and then tells us that he is over here for the sailing rather than the Festival.

"I do some sailing," I said. "I know," he says. "Your shirt." Ah, the Musto logo, a dead giveaway. I felt a bit of a berk. I didn't think he looked like a cruising sailor and it turned out he was here to race in The Commodore's Cup.

Then it kicked off, like cracks of thunder and the crowd went mad. I just had a chance to shout, "What's your name?" but couldn't hear his reply.



Top: In front of the main stage.
Above: On our way home at last.

LOCAL AMENITIES

Opposite our berth on the west bank of the dock was **The Bargeman's Rest** (free house) at Little London – 01983 528828 – which served an excellent range of bistro style food along with great beers. Despite being full much of the time, the service was excellent.

There was also a number of fairly upmarket restaurants on our walks through the town, but we only sampled one, the **Chicago Rock Cafe** at Coppins Bridge – 01983 537111 – which does great pizza and burgers. And wine, of course.

For chandlery, **Brent Marine** behind the Bargeman's Rest in Little London was the answer. You can call them on 01983 526125.

There was a **Lidl** mini-market about five minutes away just the other side of Medina Way, again behind the Bargeman's Rest. And there was a **Morrison's** in the town on South Street about 10 minutes away. They must have been told there was a festival on, because you could hardly move in there for the cases of beer stacked ceiling high in the aisles.