

## Gosport Rally – 19 April 2008

Spurred on by the phrase “not even in a brewery”, a group of ROC sailors turned up at Gosport for a tour round the Oak Leaf Brewery. Congratulations go to John and Margaret Haines who actually arrived by “Gandy Dancer” – although there was some excuse for the others. Firstly the weather could have been kinder – a lot kinder – and secondly many of the boats were already berthed at or near Gosport.

Clearly anxious to ensure adequate numbers (or possibly refusing to believe anyone could not want to visit a brewery) Phil acquired another visitor, Edward (see Yachting Monthly “Confessional”, June 2008), whom he met in the marina and who subsequently, and possibly under the influence of a few beers, expressed a vague interest in joining the club.

The Oakleaf Brewing Company has already achieved various awards from local Beer Festivals. Hole Hearted 4.7%, one of its original ales, has been voted by Camra to be The Champion Beer of Hampshire 2002, 2003 & 2005 and Champion Beer of the Festival at Gosport Beer Festival 2004 and Southampton Beer Festival 2004. Maypole Mild has also won a National Award, achieving the Mild Gold Award for the SIBA National Competition 2004.

The tour of the brewery itself was fascinating. The brewery was well named a micro-brewery but certainly quality made up for quantity. We were shown round by Dave Pickersgill and his son-in-law Ed and the depth of knowledge and sheer enthusiasm for their subject made the two guides (who also owned and ran the place) riveting to listen to. They passed out samples of their craft throughout their tour and talk which kept everyone’s attention albeit a little less clearly focussed by the close.

Since the restaurant in Gosport marina is still not open Phil, in a desperate attempt to get some boaty flavour to the whole thing, had booked a restaurant which could be best accessed via the Gosport ferry. A few members expressed real delight when they found they qualified for senior citizen’s tickets. A short stroll along Gunwharf quays led to the Indian palace – slightly different to many but which seemed to deserve its reputation for good food.

Following the meal people returned to boats or cars according to what was where. An interesting meet, but sadly let down by strong Easterlies.

*(A link to photographs taken on this event will be added soon – watch for notification on the News page of the website.)*