

VERNON LILFORD SPIRIT OF VARIETY
SKIPPERS REPORT
2016

The start of 2016 came around quickly. The S.O.V was lifted out of the water, given her spring clean and re antifouled, re launched with sails hoisted and ready for the season in April.

Sessions started in April, we had a steady flow of people making bookings, although we were perhaps not as busy in some previous years we carried out as many sessions as we could facilitate. As we moved through the summer, the flow of passengers began to increase.

The start of August brought with it some windy days. Luckily we were able to catch a fresh breeze that accelerated us on a passage to Sark. We had a group of young people on board. The passage to Sark was swift and we found ourselves anchored up in Greve De la Ville in under 4 hours. This provided an excellent opportunity to enjoy a rustic style BBQ on the pebble beach. Ferrying kit, food and crew ashore was an interesting exercise in logistics. All carried out using only a small dinghy, this certainly helped enhance their teambuilding skills.

Rising early the next morning we cooked breakfast and sailed back to St Helier, by now the wind had decreased and we had a pleasant trip home. During the trip the crew have a large part to play and are kept active with tasks, such as sail trim, helming, helping with navigation, keeping a logbook and cleaning the after every trip.

Working together with Jersey Youth Service has enabled us to provide a couple of trips to young people, who really appreciate the rare opportunity to experience life on a sailing boat, or simply just a short time out from the pressures some of the young people may face.

We endeavour to set sail as often as we can, this is not always as easy as one may think. It requires building good working relationships with both staff and service users. Over the last couple of years we have noticed a decline with school user groups. This appears to be due to educational and time pressures, applied on teaching staff. With fewer teaching assists to help carry the workload required, it becomes harder to set up such activities as sailing trips. This is an area we believe we can improve looking forward, and I will be working hard to regenerate our relationships with schools, specifically targeting Mont a Labbe.