

POND LIFE IN WALES. 2.

Sunday 10th October 2021.

By Nige Dale.

The pond life has been a little less frequent than I was hoping to achieve with using the Pembroke Castle Pond as a venue for sailing. The seasonal weather of September with winds too strong and frequent rain has made sailing all but impossible. The weather in this area is compounded by the effects of being near the coast, and with a south west aspect to the Atlantic Ocean, doesn't help. With the weather forecast favourable for the day, I loaded the Plymouth into the car and set off for Pembroke Castle Pond. I have sailed the Plymouth once since its rebuild, but that was at Margam Park, near Port Talbot, which is near eighty miles from my home, but Pembroke Castle is about twenty four miles and a far more accessible water, in time and distance.



The Castle Pond looked pretty much the same as it did in September, with no seasonal effects visible in the flora, still green and ignoring the onset of autumn. The cloud base was heavy in places, broken by a warm sunshine, all disturbed by a

blustery northern wind that couldn't make up its mind of which force of the Beaufort scale to use.

The meteorological variability was not dissimilar to a spring morning in April, but having lived long enough in these isles, I tend not to be too surprised by the weather. I am hesitant to use the term climate change as this implies it was stable at some point in history, and a discussion I am not willing to get in to. In accepting the meteorological variability of the weather today will make interesting sailing, I will ignore the weather and try to use it instead.

There is a floating pontoon within the Castle Pond, which is there to offer visiting boats a mooring. Access is from the sea at high tide via a stop gate, which is rarely used these days, so the water in the pond today is fresh water, filled by the Pembroke River through some very large and impressive mill ponds upstream.



I set up the Plymouth for sailing, and set her on the water for what would be the second outing since the rebuild. The blustery wind was a problem where, good runs were stopped short by the wind suddenly deciding to abate, then as it raised again to a usable wind, was affected by the buildings and the walls around the pond offering no prevalent direction of travel, occasionally leaving the boat and the sails in a state of idle confusion. The sailing conditions were what you could expect when sailing a model boat, but all in one morning, a quiet controlled patience waiting for the wind,

frustration in trying to identify the wind direction, and pure pleasure in the good runs of the boat made when the wind condition was just perfect.



The above pictures were taken during a period of frustration whilst waiting for the wind to decide if it was going to blow and from which direction that blow was to come. The crease in the Main Sail indicates the peak is set too high, this wasn't the case when the Plymouth went into the water, so it could be a result in a change of moisture content of the fabric of the sail. This was confirmed when the boat was taken out of the water at the end of play and the sail reset. Before the next outing I will lift the Foresail a little and increase the incline of the Bow Sprit, this should improve the look of the model.

A good mornings sailing, a couple of brief conversations with interested parties, but unfortunately no other model enthusiasts to share the day. Perhaps next time.