

MTB102 Newsletter Oct 2015.

After the epic trip to Dunkirk and Ostend MTB102 was booked in at Brightlingsea Boat Show in early July. This is a very pleasant trip of just over 50 miles and we were met at Brightlingsea by the new Harbour Master, Steve Chick, who is a past CO of Illustrious. Steve ensured we had a very comfortable stay with a much better attitude than his predecessor.

The Saturday was spent coping with a large number of visitors which kept our crew busy but Sunday the heavens opened and Brightlingsea stayed at home. The rain stopped in time for us to slip and make our way back to Lowestoft.

Earlier in the year the Trust had been approached with regard to taking MTB102 to Henley for the revitalised Trad Boat Festival. They agreed to pay the cost of the fuel to get there and so on July 14th we sailed from Lowestoft at 04.45. The trip to the Thames was very comfortable and we arrived at Hammerton Ferry Boatyard at 17.00. Francis at the yard made us very welcome so we enjoyed a comfortable night.

The next day we made our way through the locks as far as Boveney Lock where we spent the night. Away early Friday morning we made good time through more locks and arrived at Fawley Meadow, Henley mid-afternoon.

The locks on the Thames certainly test the crew of 102 as there is not a lot of room to spare and the manoeuvring in and out is often on a bend which increases the problem. Every lock keeper gets his photos of an unusual visitor to his lock and 102 is treated very well.

While at Henley we did two trips around the mile which again tests us, not for the space available, but the multitude of other boats of all shapes and sizes around us.

After the event we had a leisurely trip back down the Thames as we wished to be at Harwich for the Sea Festival the following weekend. We arrived at Harwich on the Wednesday afternoon to be greeted by the Harbour Master saying "I don't think it is a good idea to stay here over the next few days as the weather is going North-West 40+ knots", so we rested, waited for the tide to turn and headed back to Lowestoft. The forecast was fairly accurate so we made the right decision.

Since then we have had to abort two other trips due to the weather, one to the Blackwater for a memorial event for RAF Bradwell and the other to St Katharines Dock for the Thames Festival. Between those we did manage to get to Gt. Yarmouth for their Maritime Festival. This is usually a good event but we can't get visitors on board so our fund raising suffers.

MTB102 is now on her home berth waiting for the cradle, which should be available mid February. For the most part a successful year but a pity about the events we couldn't get to.

Richard Basey,
Skipper MTB102.