

MTB102 News November 2017

The summer of 2017 has been one of the worst we have known for the operation of MTB102. We have had to cancel our attendance at half the events we had hoped to attend due to the weather. There has been an abundance of south westerly winds on the East Coast that have been way above our operational limits. Punching into head seas at F7 on an 80 year old boat is not much fun and definitely not good for MTB102.

The first event of the year was organised at short notice as we had originally intended to be at Chatham over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend but this was changed to a trip to Brightlingsea Sea Festival for the Saturday and Sunday.

The trip down was very good and we made good time and arrived at 16.00 on the Friday and moored alongside the Pioneer on the Heritage Pontoon at Brightlingsea.

Saturday morning we moved across the channel and moored alongside Pioneer again on the end of Town Pier and spent the day open to the public and had a busy day. At 16.00 we moved off Pioneer to allow her to sail down river and then had Town Pier to ourselves for the night.

Open to the public again Sunday morning until Midday when we had to let Pioneer back in, so we moved back to the Heritage Pontoon for lunch.

At 15.00 we slipped and headed outbound for Lowestoft.

The sea conditions were near perfect for the trip back and we were able to give 102 her head on full throttle for the last hour and ran into Lowestoft at 25kts to catch the 19.00 bridge lift.

In June we had hoped to sail down to the Thames for an ADLS event at Windsor but the weather had other ideas so we had to cancel that one.

Next up at the beginning of July was the Beccles Charter week end at Hippersons Boatyard at Beccles. No weather problems for this one as it was all on the river Waveney. We slipped from our yard, straight through the railway swing bridge and into Mutford Lock. This was a very pleasant relaxed trip and apart from some very tight manoeuvring at the boatyard, was very straight forward. We had a lot of visitors that kept Debbie and Maggie busy with guided tours. Wally Webb from BBC Radio Norfolk turned up on his boat to cover the story which was a pleasant surprise.

In July we did a short interview for Anglia TV on board as a lead in to the Premier of the Dunkirk film that 102 took part in the year before. The interview was on board in a rainstorm so we were a bit damp.

Harwich Sea Festival and Ipswich Maritime Festival both had to be cancelled because of more south westerly force seven winds. Orfordness is not a good place to be under those conditions heading into the weather.

That just left Gt. Yarmouth Maritime Festival at the beginning of September. This one we did manage although the weather was due to turn late on the Sunday but a convenient rain storm on Sunday afternoon hastened the end of the show so we got away early and beat the weather home. The Festival itself was good for us as usual and we had a lot of interest but unfortunately we cannot get the public on board there.

So the summer of 2017 was not the best we have had and to make it worse, when the Dunkirk film was released MTB102 was nowhere to be seen. We guess she was left on the cutting room floor which is a big disappointment as she was the only ex Royal Navy vessel on the set that was actually there in 1940. I guess it's a case of "don't let the facts get in the way of a good story". The story could have been told much better!

Richard Basey, MTB102 Trust.