

MTB102 Newsletter November 2014.

After the Dunkirk and D Day Commemorations it was back to the usual routine for MTB102. We were asked to escort a flotilla of Broads boats on a trip from Gt. Yarmouth to Lowestoft in July but for various reasons this was cancelled although 102 and Humber still went to sea with boat people interested to see what sea going small boats are like. It was a good day with a very kind North Sea but Humber decided to spoil the party with gearbox problems caused by faulty oil coolers.

Late July was the time of Harwich Sea Festival so on the Saturday 26th we sailed from Lowestoft at 14.30 and arrived at Harwich Saturday evening. 102 was made ready for visitors on the Sunday.

The event was very well attended with a large number of visitors to the pier. Despite problems with crossing a Humber Keel to get to 102 we had a lot of visitors on board and managed to sell more sweat shirts and tee shirts which all helps with the running costs of MTB102.

First weekend in September is usually Gt. Yarmouth Maritime Festival and one of our favourite events. A quick trip from Lowestoft to Yarmouth and alongside the Festival Quay between a tall ship and Customs Cutter. This event always brings out characters from MTB 102s past and this year was no exception. There are upward of 40,000 visitors to this event each year and a great deal of interest shown in MTB102. Keeps us very busy and also moves a few more sales items.

The following weekend was the Thames Festival at St Katharines Dock and for this we had a crew made up of mainly ex Royal Navy personnel. The trip down on the Friday was excellent with a following wind and sea and we made good time and arrived at St Kats at High water and were able to go straight into the lock.

Once in the lock we were given our berth position which I was able to walk to before entering the dock to see the problems facing us. The berth was directly in front of the Dickens Inn and entailed manoeuvring around a steel tug, the Portway, and between four Dunkirk Little Ships. There was just enough space for 102 and I was able to position her precisely just using the engines. It was good having the ex Navy guys on board as they fully understood the problems and were a great help in calling distances and clearances.

Over the weekend we had several skippers of boats, that we had to pass to get into our berth, visit us and remark about our manoeuvring without using the wheel.

Over the two days in the Dock we had so many visitors that we had to operate a queue system to stop us being overloaded on deck which kept us all busy with plenty of sales and donations. The crew certainly earnt their passage that weekend.

On the Sunday late afternoon the organisers hosted a prize giving and much to my surprise, MTB102 was runner up in the best dressed vessel competition. Remarkable as all we had were her usual Ensign, flags and dressing line. It did give us all a good feeling though.

The trip home on the Monday was as good as the trip down. We left very early to get the maximum benefit of the tide. Enjoyed the company of a Fairey Huntsman launch on the lower Thames, passed Dunkirk Little Ship Riis 1 in the estuary at high speed on their request and increased our normal cruising speed to try and make the Lowestoft Bridge lift at 1600 instead of the previously planned 1900. We ran in with two minutes to spare.

This nicely rounded off the Summer. During this trip various bits of video were taken and a walk through MTB102 made which can now be seen on YouTube if you search for MTB102 and the Captains blog.

There was just one more commitment to honour which was to take the Broadland Boat Owners Club out for a trip. This had been cancelled several times due to bad weather forecasts but we finally managed to fit them in on the 28th September. The sea was flat. There was very little wind but it was misty.

After an appeal by Norfolk Marine, MTB102 has been supplied with an AIS class B set at a big discount, which is now installed and working so if you check out www.marinetraffic.com/ais/home you should be able to follow the progress of 102 when she is at sea.

Richard Basey,
Skipper MTB102.