

# MTB102 TRUST



**NEWSLETTER**  
**Autumn 2011**

# **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE MTB102 TRUST**

**The MTB102 Trust exists to maintain, restore and operate MTB102 so that present generations can remember, and future generations will be able to experience, the type of vessel that fought for the survival of freedom in coastal waters.**

The Summer weekends this year were not very kind to us and caused us to cancel trips for interested groups which we find disappointing, and so the next event we managed after the Ramsgate trip was to the Thames for the Association of Dunkirk Little Ships Veterans Cruise.

### **FUEL AGAIN**

MTB102 was refuelled with another 1000ltrs of diesel, the engines were checked over and after the supermarket run all provisions were on board.

The weather was watched carefully for seven days and the decision made to sail at 0640 on September 1<sup>st</sup>. The 0700 Lowestoft Bridge was booked and we sailed on time.

### **BACK AT SEA**

With the wind and tide behind us we had an excellent trip down the North Sea and into the Thames and took the flood tide up the river to Tower Bridge. The Royal Navy Reserve had given us permission to use the Pontoon at HMS President, and by 1800 we were safely alongside.

### **PLA ON BOARD**

As we wished to catch the flood tide further up river the following day we had a relaxed morning and waited to be joined by Darren Knight from the Port of London Authority for the trip to Teddington. The reason for taking Darren with us is that the ADLS is closely involved with the organisation of the Queens Jubilee Pageant to take place next June, and Darren wished to see the capabilities of a Dunkirk Little Ship first hand., He was not disappointed and expressed surprise at how docile such a potent vessel could be.

### **TIMING**

We timed the upstream passage perfectly and arrived at Richmond half tide lock just after it opened for free flow. This saved us the bother of having to go through the Richmond Lock. Then it is a short trip to Teddington Lock and on to the non-tidal Thames.

Darren left us at Teddington and took the train back to London.

### **THAMES MOTOR YACHT CLUB**

Out of Teddington Lock we headed upstream for the Thames Motor Yacht Club at Hampton Court who were to be our hosts for the weekend. We arrived at 1800 and caused the usual stir when MTB102 visits for the first time. Once sorted we enjoyed our dinner cooked on their barbeque and enjoyed the London Pride available in their riverside clubroom.



MTB102 in front of the Thames Motor Yacht Club

## **TODAY'S VETERANS**

The following day was to feature a new event for the ADLS as we were to host patients and staff from Headley Court, the Defence Rehabilitation Centre for the wounded from today's conflicts. We also had in attendance a contingent from HMS Collingwood, the Royal Navy training establishment at Fareham, who were with us to assist with our boats and guests.

## **SPIRIT**

On Saturday morning the guests arrived and were very well entertained by the Thames Motor Yacht Club until being allocated to various Dunkirk Little Ships. At 1330 we slipped, and the Fleet headed down stream lead by MTB102. Although we had no passengers on board we were carrying the Commodore of the Thames Motor Yacht Club. When we arrived at Teddington lock the whole fleet was squeezed into the barge lock, and MTB102 welcomed on board four Afghan veterans including one with no left arm and an artificial left leg. It is so sad to see these young guys who now have a lifetime in front of them coping with these problems but amazing how they cope, and their spirit is undaunted. The ones with us wanted to get back to Afghanistan and have another go.

## **DRY SHIP**

We sailed as far as Richmond lock, turned and sailed back to Hampton Court. By the time we were alongside again MTB102 was a dry ship. Back ashore the guests were treated to a wonderful barbecue and with a military band in attendance a good time was had by all. Then when we were ready to crash our four guests on 102 rang for a taxi and set off to do the town despite their problems.

## **ANNUAL EVENT?**

This was the first time the ADLS had tried this event and it proved to be very successful. The Thames Motor Yacht Club were also very pleased, and so this may become a joint annual event.



102 in company with the ADLS at the start of the Vets Cruise

## **WW II VETS**

On Sunday morning our WW2 guests arrived and were allocated their boats for the day. MTB102 usually has Royal Navy Veterans on board, and this year they were joined by an ex Wren who spent some of her war at Bletchley Park. They all have interesting stories to tell.



## **DOWNSTREAM**

At 1000 we slipped from the Thames Motor Yacht Club, and, as we were starting much further up river than usual, we headed downstream to Ravens Ait where we turned around the island and headed back upstream. As we were also allowing for separation of the convoy through the locks, the lead group following MTB102 took the long way round at Desborough Cut. This was a novelty for us on 102 as we have always used the Cut on our previous trips up the Thames. This was when the rain started.



"Let me out!" Waiting for the lock gates to open

## **WEYBRIDGE**

The head of the convoy arrived at Weybridge Mariners in the rain at about 1300 and had a bit of difficulty getting alongside as there is some silting up outside the club. But with a bit of perseverance we managed it and got our Vets ashore to enjoy the hospitality of the club. After lunch the Vets returned by road in a fleet of vintage cars. Our Royal Navy sailors from HMS Collingwood boarded their bus and headed for home. We sailed at 1420 and headed back to the Thames Motor Yacht Club. This time we had extra help as Lt. John Little RN had managed to convince his boss that a trip to Lowestoft on a Historic RN vessel would be good for him.



Arriving at Weybridge Mariners in the rain

## **HMS PRESIDENT AGAIN**

After stopping at the yacht club on the way downriver to drop off members of the club along for the experience, we carried on down river, through Teddington Lock and straight

through Richmond on free flow again. By this time it was getting dark and we had a now familiar night time trip through London arriving at HMS President at 2100. Some of the Thames bridges are very spectacular with their flood lights at night but need more navigational concentration than they do in the daylight.

### **EARLY**

We were up early Monday morning to listen to the shipping forecast and made the decision to go. So at 0700 we slipped and headed down stream. Conditions were good, and we made good time on the river. We decided to stay inshore on this trip and so cut through the Wallet Spitway at midday, which was a bit lumpy. Staying inshore we made Orfordness



Early morning at HMS President

by 1500, and by now the sea conditions were deteriorating. But fortunately the wind was southerly, and so 102 was surfing off the swell fairly well. Under those conditions she is difficult to keep on course; but our new crew was coping well, and so we had a slightly more relaxed time than usual. By 1730 we were back in Lowestoft.

### **GOODBYE**

As we had to wait until 1900 for a bridge lift we said goodbye to our Lt. and dropped him off so that he could catch the train back to London. We sat and waited for the bridge, and by 1930 MTB102 was back on her home mooring.

### **CANCELLED**

The following weekend was Gt Yarmouth Maritime Festival, but we were unable to get to it as the forecast for our sea area was up to F7, and, as we have a F5 limit on our insurance, we were unable to attend. The winds have not been kind to us over the past three years. We did manage to take part in the English Heritage Open Days, albeit on our own jetty in the boatyard.

### **FUTURE**

On the 6<sup>th</sup> September the MTB102 Trust became the sole shareholder in Newson Boatbuilders Ltd and immediately instigated some changes at the yard. We have had a big clearout and removed tons of scrap and rubbish and already have a more presentable facility. The name of the business is to be changed to MTB Marine Ltd which will continue to operate the Marina, slips and travel hoist. The shed we are leasing to the International Boatbuilding Training College which is next door to us in Sea Lake Road where they will operate their Commercial operation to be called IBTC Heritage. Our Trust and IBTC will

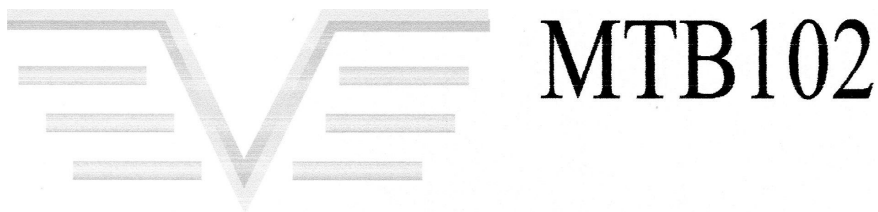
operate closely together to our mutual benefit. The old office has been brought back into use, and so we now look out on to the marina with MTB102 centre stage. The official announcement and opening will be early in the new year. All are welcome to attend.

## **FRIENDS**

The friends of MTB102 as always are very vital to our operation, and our thanks go to you for helping us keep this grand old lady doing what she is meant to do. She is always well received wherever we go and is a credit to the whole organisation, very much including the Friends.

## **NEXT YEAR**

Plans are well in hand for the Queens Diamond Jubilee Thames River Pageant next June, and as MTB102 is the boat of the present Commodore ADLS she will be leading the Dunkirk Little Ships flotilla of 45 little ships. This will be a very proud time for us all and we are very much involved with the planning for this event. It may never happen again!



The MTB 102 Trust is very grateful for the support of the following sponsors:

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