

Hi shipmates, now where shall we go? Farewell to Tim [alias Swift and Bold, new motto of the Rifles] and the wonderful duo of Anna and Jane from Bosham Sailing Club, the first pair to 'sit out' on Theo's Future, using safety harness as improvised trapeze! A special treat awaited me as another dear friend, Richard, signed on for the passage from Newcastle to Grimsby. Weather-bound in the marina at Tynemouth, we had two useful days 'make and mend' and decided that we would visit the North Tyne Blind Centre at Middlesbrough on Monday by train to be certain that we would be punctual. Lesley, of Actionaires, who undertake to provide remedial activities for blind youngsters, met us and drove us to the centre, where I talked to the elderly residents [all the young were in school.] Afterwards one elderly widow asked me if she could change a £5 note. When five £1 coins were placed in her hand, she carefully counted out two pound coins, and as she gave me the coins said 'Thank you for what you are doing; I hope this helps, and I am sorry that I can't give more.'

Back on board for a quick departure for Hartlepool in light conditions, but of course the wind was on the nose, so it was an uneventful voyage under the iron topsail. There was a true Geordie welcome from the 'Monkey Hangers' and we snuggled down in the Marina for the night – Richard helped by a tot from Collier Capitals bottle- and we snored contentedly all night. [Wives please note!] We studied the tide table carefully to plan the tidal gate for the leg to Whitby and knew that we would have a night time arrival there. The weather deteriorated steadily and we carried on in a force 7 gale, occasionally shipping fairly heavy water over the bows, and on one occasion over Richard's head, neck chest and tum. Bother. Theo's Future behaved perfectly and we made a safe landfall at Whitby late at night. We spent a wonderful morning at the Captain Cook museum in Grape Lane well laid out and covering the great navigator's life well. By 1300 we had cast off, said farewells to Glen, third coxswain of the Whitby Lifeboat, who had kindly produced a 5 day forecast for us just as we left.

The short trip to Scarborough was pretty uneventful and we were soon alongside a mock pirate ship called the Hispaniola complete with a glass fibre effigy of Captain Blackbeard on the Quarterdeck! The Scarborough Yacht Club made us most welcome in their unique clubhouse which was part of the lighthouse at the harbour entrance. Many thanks to Steve for providing transport in the morning to get fuel from outside town.

Up early next morning to tackle Flamborough Head, a significant headland to get around. Tricky cross currents greeted us but by keeping sight of the top of the lighthouse just in view (local knowledge!) we were soon safely around and greeted by a large seal who popped up to check on our whereabouts! Moules frites in Bridlington ended another memorable day at sea. A big journey ahead beckoned and despite murky conditions we covered the 40 miles down to Grimsby in good order. Chal, with his usual good humour, enthusiasm and efficiency, had co-ordinated with Jilly from Fight for Sight which resulted in a delightful welcome from the Harbour Master and the Humber Cruising Association who offered their clubhouse and facilities at our disposal.

Richard beat a quick retreat in the rain but it had been a delightful week together – many thanks old friend..... and for your subsequent weather updates.

Fair winds to one and all!

Mike