

Hi Shipmates,

Blog No 12 – The Final One!

We made it! At 1100hrs on Sunday 28th September, the good ship Theo's Future sailed proudly into Bosham's ancient quay to a rapturous welcome from family and friends Thank you all so much for contributing to that magic moment.

But there's another week to portray to you all before we expand upon the final outcome and week 12 started in Harwich at Shotley Marina where Edward Johnson and George Holroyd joined me for the first part of the final leg. With the wind set fair in the East, we passed out through the marina lock and were soon easing down stream with the ebb towards the entrance of Harwich harbour past several enormous container ships disgorging/receiving their 'big boxes' at Felixstowe. As we set a course SE down across the Thames Estuary we suddenly realised that we, the crew, were Father/Grandfather/Godfather respectively – what a team!! Unfortunately, the wind, although fair, wasn't quite strong enough to allow the 'iron topsail' (alias Yamaha 5hp which has run faultlessly throughout) to be banished but we negotiated the numerous sand banks with the aid of our fabulous Garmin 550 GPS, what an amazing 'navaid' it has been, without which one simply would not have been able to tackle the coastline dangers at such close hand. I must also add that the 'hardcopy' chart was always to hand just in case the IT let us down for whatever reason (technology and reliability are not always first cousins!).

Feeling somewhat peckish, I peeked into the bag of goodies supplied by Eva (Edward's better half) to discover all my favourites.... Freshly baked crusty apple cake – secret Swedish recipe, egg/bacon sandwiches, smoked salmon salad and ginger biscuits covered in thick dark chocolate (only from Waitrose!). What a floating feast we had all day – thank you Eva; no wonder Edward has a constant smile on his face.... passed several ships on the way who were also sharing the narrow channels down to Tilbury and the Port of London before we made course for North Foreland which was duly rounded, George at the helm, but against the tide which had finally decided to turn the other way.... oh bother, but that's what tides do! We finally entered Ramsgate after a wonderful day at sea much enjoyed by all. George left us without delay to get back to Elin and Theo leaving Edward and I to enjoy the delights of the old fashioned Edwardian sea side resort. I can thoroughly recommend the central fish and chip shop enthusiastically run by a delightful Turkish family who can also provide delicious Baklava for pud!

Up early to catch the tide southwards past Deal (the former Royal Marine barracks now largely converted to much needed housing/apartments) and round South Foreland and Dover harbour which was as busy as usual with constant ship movements – but the Port Control was glad to hear from us on VHF channel 74 and we duly found a suitable gap and whizzed by the East entrance, then the West entrance where one can be ambushed by the emerging fast cat if one's not extremely careful.... Wind still in the NE (unbelievable!) and our Cayman Island genneker billowing out, we yomped forward at 6/7 knots over the ground.... a wonderful feeling in the morning sunshine! A few hours later we nosed past Dungeness with its Nuclear Power Station which can easily be mistaken for a container ship on the horizon, and into Rye's narrow but charming river entrance. Lovely welcome from the harbour master (thanks, Chal, for warming him up!) with large crowd and open air live jazz in the background from the William the Conqueror pub on the other bank! It would have been fun to have joined in but lack of a

suitable mooring or grounding location forced us up river towards the ancient medieval town of Rye itself, perched on a hill with its conspicuous Norman church atop the mound. As we carefully negotiated the winding river which was fast becoming narrower and narrower we finally ended up alongside a deserted quay in the very heart of the town. Time for 'sundowners' and reflections of yet another top day on the 'oggin'..... Having climbed the hill we just missed a quickie visit to the church and settled for sups at the Union Pub which made up for our disappointment with delicious scoff and wine (VMT Edward!). Up at 05ringbolt/ringbolt (!) and, with just 0.8m water beneath us, we wasted no time in executing our escape from this delightful medieval experience.

Eastbourne was reached without difficulty and it was farewell to Edward, my truly enjoyable sailing companion of the last 3 days. But his capable shoes were soon filled by my old friend David Moore who kindly stepped into the breach having been let down by another crew at short notice. With the wind still in the East, (almost unheard of in the equinoxial month of September), we picked our way through the numerous lobster pots off Beachy Head with its conspicuous white cliffs and were soon rounding the massively defended entrance to Brighton Marina where we were met by John Davey, Director of Brighton Marina Estate, who promptly took us out to lunch – how nice was that! And a big thanks also to Roy and all the Premier Marina staff who couldn't have been more helpful.

The next short leg to Littlehampton was a solo sail which was great fun and Theo's Future punched her way into the strong ebb of the harbour entrance with just .3m of way over the bar..... cutting it just a little fine but 'needs must when the devil drives' and having made safely alongside the visitors berth I was joined by David, who was between music lessons, and consumed the most wonderful full English 'fat boys' breakfast in the Balaton Restaurant run by George and Kalli Malakounides, a lovely Greek Cypriot family..... highly recommended 'top spot' and thank you so much! After a day's work onboard, it was back to Dave and Terri's for a spot of R&R as we were suddenly ahead of schedule due to the fair weather! Thanks guys.....

Saturday morning saw my son James and his lovely wife Jayne join me for the final leg to Chichester Harbour and, with the breeze set fair, we set off down harbour, through some turbulence at the entrance and emerged into the English Channel with morning sun sparkling on the sea. Up sails, including the delightful Cayman Islands Genneker provided by the Cayman Islands Department of Tourism and off we set. Butlins Holiday Camp with its conspicuous white hat tents was soon abeam and we gybed for the Looe Channel that is quite narrow but a great short cut in fair weather... and so on to West Pole and in through the entrance against the ebb. There was suddenly a huge cheer from a pursuing Cornish Shrimper with none other than my dear friend, Peter Trewill..... great to see him and so many thanks for coming out to meet us. Safely into Sparkes Marina and a good scrub out before a magnificent celebration seafood supper at Marina Jaks – thanks James for such a fun boys night out!

And so Sunday finally dawned and with James, Jayne and my delightful little Grandson, Jack, complete in his mini lifejacket, we edged our way ever closer towards Bosham Quay past East Head, Itchenor and Cobnor where there was a huge cheer (thanks BSC and 420 sailors!). With Jayne on the helm and James holding onto Jack, we finally made it into Bosham Quay to a fabulous welcome by one and all. Hat in one hand and fog horn in the other, I leapt onto the quay to embrace my Darling Wife Pippa and receive a bottle of my favourite Moet Chandon which was

duly sprayed, Lewis Hamilton style, over anyone in range before downing the rest and shaking a forest of hands..... I had finally made it back to whence I had started – gone was the stormy weather, replaced by lovely sunshine. Big thanks to everyone who had turned out to welcome us back including Dr Ulrich Luhmann and Dr H Viet Tran, two top scientists from Professor Moore's research team which was a lovely surprise. Then drinks all round and lunch in the sailing club complete with delicious welcome home 'Theo's Future' cake with a beautifully crafted replica of the yacht on top!! A truly lovely compliment to this brave little yacht that had been my home for 86 days.

10 vital stats for interest..

- 1720 nautical miles sailed with the wind 'on de nose' for 11 out of 12 weeks!
- 60 ports visited (31 in England, 10 in Wales, 15 in Scotland, 3 on the Isle of Man and 1 in Northern Ireland).
- Over £32,000 raised at time of arrival and still going up, a HUGE thank you to everyone.....
- 25 different crew members from 18 months to 68 years old!
- Largest pod of dolphins – at least 30, all munching spawning salmon at the mouth of the River Tay near Dundee.
- Longest daily run 12.5 hours – 59nm from Grimsby to Wells-next-the-Sea in North Norfolk across the turbulent waters of the Wash.
- Explorers visited:
 1. Captain Scott Antarctic Museum/RRS Discovery in Dundee
 2. Nelson's last surviving frigate - HMS Trincomalee - at Hartlepool plus working quayside from the period
 3. Captain Cook Museum and treasures in Whitby
- Fuel consumed – approx 520 litres of petrol.
- Most people onboard – 22 for 'sundowners' in Lundy (8 adults and 14 children) the self-draining cockpit was half full of water....!!
- Top 12 pubs/eating establishments (in order of attendance):
 1. Cherub – Dartmouth (E)
 2. Admiral Benbow – Penzance (E)
 3. Rick Stein's Fish 'n Chips – Padstow (E)
 4. Ty Coch Inn – Porthdinllaen (W)
 5. Mount Stewart Hotel – Portpatrick (S)
 6. Londonderry Arms – Carnlough (NI)
 7. Moorings Hotel – Benavie, Caledonian Canal (S)
 8. Leon's Fish Restaurant – Grimsby (E)
 9. Jolly Sailor – Orford (E)
 10. Union Inn – Rye (E)
 11. Balaton Café – Littlehampton (E)
 12. Marina Jaks – Sparkes Marina, Hayling Island (E)

Mike