

Hi Everyone

What an absolutely fantastic send-off you all gave me from a very windswept Bosham Quay last Saturday!! To be surrounded by all my family and so many friends from near and far was very humbling. Thank you all so much for sending 'Theo's Future' on her way in such style.....

I can't list everyone here but special thanks goes to

- Dean Nicholas who foresook the Cathedral Cloisters to be amongst us all and lead the blessing and naming ceremony with Rev Jane (sister-in-law) soaking us in holy water (!)
- Canon Tom reminding us of Sir Francis Drake's immortal words(the job isn't done 'til its thoroughly finished! - no pressure Mike I hear him thinking.....)
- Sandy Woodward for his words of encouragement and wisdom
- Michele Acton from Fight for Sight without whose practical contribution and support we could never have undertaken this project
- Next special thanks goes to my lovely daughter-in-law Jayne for stepping aboard and popping the cork to soak the bows in Moet! Nick and I finished it off on the way down to Cobnor!!
- Next, my son James and Pip, for all their love and support particular through some difficult times since Simon's tragic and untimely passing in August 2003 - but my strong belief is that he was with us in the wind (mountain winds that blow and diamond glints on snow!) as he was for James and Jayne's wedding when the marquee shook all night in another gale! I look forward to asking him one day if my premonition was on target or wide of the mark.....
- Next my self appointed guru, Chal who has guided me through a minefield of 'this and that' to get to the start including babysitting Theo's Future at Bosham Quay through the night before so I could spend my last few precious hours with my family - a most generous thought, Chal, thank you. And now the work begins, Chal, with coordination of local port reps around the country as well as coping (Heaven forbid) with an emergency situation. Thanks for giving your time so generously, Chal, we owe you.....
- Next Dave and Terri for running the 'Fight for Sight' HQ tent.... marvellous effort.
- And finally, Debbie, Michele, Mike, Alan and Martin (via Kay) for Force 8 delicious eats and drinks!! And Rachel(what a star you are!) for setting up and dismantling the arena with all your helpers.... Mary, Lisa, Mary (sister!) , Dick and everyone else who lent a hand!!

So, here we are, holed up in Sparkes Marina waiting for the gale to go away..... please! In actual fact, we were lucky to even get this far and it was touch and go as to whether we would even leave the quay..... and that's where my thanks goes to Gavin for a significant feat of seamanship.... did he make it look easy? Yes, perhaps, but I can assure you that it was only through his outstanding seamanship that we got away cleanly and in good shape. Then we saw the 1 metre surf coming up the Itchenor Reach and I requested a further alongside tow. The surf was incredible and Gavin got soaked... but he stuck to his task gallantly whilst Nick and I cowered under the wonderful spray hood from John Bland at Tecsew (easily the best spray hood awning maker on the south coast). Eventually we crossed the harbour entrance (and 6 foot standing waves over the Winner!) and reached the safety of Sparkes Marina. Wow, what an opening leg..... 3 miles of hell! Anyway, we dusted

down Gavin and filled him up with a couple of coffees and off he went as if nothing had happened. THANK YOU Gavin, you're a star and a damn good seaman - well done! Thanks to your boss, Phil for a few cheeky photocopies of the flyer..... great support from BSC! The club burgee will be flying proud around the coast of Britain! And thanks, Mike McGrail for all your support from the quay and Burhill Estates.

So, farewell to Nick who leaves 'Theo's Future' this afternoon after 3 days of screwing and fixing all the the things I hadn't quite got to... really fantastic support, old friend (and webmaster!!); just a shame that we only covered 3 miles on your leg!!

Lastly, thanks Pete and the Sparkes Marina Team for your instant excellent support to 'Theo's Future'. And Simon in the excellent 'Marina Jacks' restaurant at Sparkes for helping us celebrate only 1497 nautical miles to go! WONDERFUL SUPPORT..... from our local marina which I can thoroughly recommend.

That's all for now.

Fair winds

Mike