

## Padstow – Holyhead

Summers in Britain can be pretty hit and miss, but sitting at Bodmin Parkway waiting for the bus to Padstow, with the gentle choo choo of the tourist steam train in the background, I was sure there were a few sunny days on the horizon. As the beautiful Doom and its various Bars roared into view, I felt a sense of excitement. Mike had invited me to crew for a couple of weeks on Theo's Future (AKA Sea Badger). The cause – children's eyesight, and a very worthy one at that.

Some of the people we met along the way were so generous, including young kids. I have been on a few yachts with Mike Brooke in the past few years, and learnt a lot. Mainly that he likes Porridge for breakfast, and cheese and Marmite sandwiches for 'elevenses'.

Theos Future is a small yacht. It didn't take me long to realise that once maintenance got underway, 'down below' just became an abyss. Most common catchphrase on TF? "Have you seen..."; "Do you know where..."; "If you happen to bump into...". You get the idea.

But what a lovely sail. Along the Cornish coast to sunny Bude. Friendship, ales, and not once but twice did Skipper let the dog (the dinghy) off the lead. Boy, was I glad it wasn't me. On past GCHQ and their domineering satellite dishes ready to fall off the cliffs. Don't mention terrorism –'cos those people listen real good. And on to Lundy...

What a gem in the Bristol Channel. Go before you 'go' – that's all I've got to say. We didn't run out of puff on our 'yomp', but the island seems short on Puffins. Read somewhere that their hibernation (out at sea) is being effected by unusually turbulent weather and they are on the decrease. It's a sad tale for the Bird with the Amy Winehouse eyes.

Sailing over to South Wales was most relaxing. Nothing like Chichester Harbour – in that there really were no other boats about. Good to meet Mike's sister Mary. Well helmed! Shame about the \*\*\*\*\* cap. We were blessed with sunny skies from Tenby through to Dale/Neyland/Fishguard and that delightful place Skova.

Drinking in pubs frequented nearly half a century ago by Wales' own Richard Burton. Swimming in waters even the turncoat Catherine Zeta Douglas would be proud to dip a toe into. We had a good old time.

Mike had me planning coastal passages. Tidal gates Oscar – That's our game. You've no doubt read about Jack Sound, Ramsey Sound and The Bitches. We had 99 problems with The Bitches (that's a hip hop reference just in case you overlooked it). Daisy sailed TF very well, and if we're lucky she might post a few of her photos up on the site.

The weather turned come Aberaeron. No matter, took it all in our stride. As my land-lubbing Louche London contemporaries told me before I set off – you'll probably want a bit of all types of weather won't you?

Could have done without the squall by the rocks near Pwthelli, but the gale force beat up onto the pontoon at Holyhead was quite something. Ooooooh, you should've seen how upset '5 horsepower Mike' was when he realised we only had the lifting

keel half way down!

Anyways. Congratulations to Mike and Pippa on getting such a super, worthwhile project off the ground. It was a pleasure to be involved.

I have spent some time cutting a short film of my time onboard.

Due to convergence and compression (Media Buzz Words Dahling) not being quite what they ought - Not yet anyway - technology overload at this end I can tell you - the film is hugely pixelated in an MPEG4 format. If anybody knows how to upload 900MB of Quicktime in quick time let me know.

Probably better to watch it after a sherbet or two...

<http://www.youtube.com/user/oskiejoneswhite>