

Morwenna trip 07/07/10 to 11/07/10 – St Katherine Dock, London, to Gosport

Skipper: Jim White; Mate: Rob Stanier; Crew: Dale Smith, Dave White, and Eddie Ault.

Distances, from Reeds:

Tower Bridge to Queenborough 45 M

Queenborough to Dover 49 M

Dover to Gosport 110 M

Total 204 M

List of trips on Morwenna came on an email sent 24th June. 7th to 11th July was perfect timing, so booked a place on 30th June. Dynamic!

Wed 07/07/10 Paul gave me a lift to Havant at 12:30, train to Waterloo, tube to Tower Hill by 15:00. Couldn't see directions, so walked up and coned the sun from between the clouds,



worked out N and S, and walked straight to the dock. Saw Morwenna there, phoned mobile number. They were at a local hostelry relaxing after lunch, so I went on board, changed, and had a look around. Wow! First saw her at Southampton Boat Show last September, but this was personal! Rob arrived, and made me feel most welcome. Soon Jim and Dale also arrived, and I went for a walk round the dock with Dale, to have a look at the other boats. Lots of Thames barges with scandalised sprit-sails about. Quite moving! Some big house boats too. Dale did

the trip up to London as well. They each had a thermos mug with a handle, so it could be hooked on the coamings. Jim cooked, Dave arrived, and we ate on board. Jim's friends arrived and they all went to the pub. I'd had a long day so hit the sack – top forward port side bunk. Very comfortable once I got in it. Opening the fore hatch gave that bit of added ventilation in the warm Summer conditions.

Thu 08/07/10 Up 0700. Heads ashore immaculate.

Considering how many boats there were, surprisingly there was only one other person in there, so no waiting, no hassle. Rob made breakfast, and we cast off 0900. Jim had interviewed the Harbour Master, and VHF Ch80 announced that Morwenna had priority for the dock, and a long bowsprit. The Dutch sailing yacht manoeuvring ahead of us with his bow



thrusters pulled back out of our way. Jim did marvels at handling the small current and breeze in the confined harbour while waiting for the bridge to open. As soon as the foot bridge opened, he threaded Morwenna into the first space in the lock, Port side to. Lock opened at about 10:00, and we were off down river. Tower Bridge, a few yards upstream of us, was open, apparently a very expensive deal. More Thames barges rafted alongside downstream of St



Katherine's lock. Calm, light drizzle. Rob made us more breakfast. Then the sun came out, and



it was hot! More food, lunch, salad, scrambled eggs, quiche, chocolates. 3 ½ Kts at the start, but by the time we went under the Dartford (QEII) Bridge we were doing 7 Kts, as the ebb took charge. Many sights: the Tower, the Gherkin, the Millennium Dome with the lit signs for navigators, the Thames Tidal Barrier. We were advised by Woolwich Radio (Ch 14) to use span “B”, nearest the South bank. Motored all the way to Queenborough on the Isle of Sheppey in the River Medway, where we arrived at about 18:00. The concrete barge was occupied, so we went alongside the hammerhead pontoon and walked ashore. There is a turnstile on the jetty, so we had to buy tokens at the Old House at Home at 50p a throw to get back on board. Rob got the cooking going, and all went ashore. Back on board to eat, oil lamps used, as no shore power. Monty Python and the Holy Grail, then Jim watched the Beowulf video, I went to bed, and the rest went back to the pub.

Fri 09/07/10 Awake early, read until everyone up about 07:00. Off jetty by 08:30. Main and topsail up, but no real breeze, motor sailing. Sun very bright and warm. Jim listening to progressive jazz while polishing the brass lamps, but no genies. Course to take us through narrow passage between shallows closer inshore, avoiding shipping (Four Fathoms Channel, Horse Channel, Gore Channel South of Margate Bank). Passed big wind farm in the Thames estuary. Breeze picked up, so jib, staysail, main and topsail, went up. At last I was sailing in Morwenna! Rob had a climb up the ratlines to free the topsail sheet from a stray block. We sailed close



hauled round North Foreland, then down passing Goodwin Sands. Lots of ferries and German and Dutch yachts. Breeze up to 20 Kts. A great sail! Into Dover 21:00. Jim persuaded the Harbour Master that we could use the Eastern entrance and skim the inside of the Southern seawall to get to the yacht harbour, which worked very well. Moored on a hammer head, nicely done Skipper! It had been warm in the sun but the air was cooler in the evening. Dinner on board again, Lots of chatting. Dave and I finished the washing up after

midnight.

Sat 10/07/10 Up 07:00, sun but foggy. Made sausages and bacon, and put par-baked baguettes in the oven. Rob organised a jib flaking out party on the pontoon. It’s surprisingly long. Tied with small stuff every few feet to stop it unfurling. Hoisted ready. Rob showed me the

snaps/films of his Atlantic crossing. Great watching! Waited until tide became less unfavourable, and cast off about noon. Took up fuel. Still foggy. Radar works well. Motor sailed past Dungeness at about 17:00, slow progress. Intention of calling in at Brighton on our way to Poole scrapped. Pushed on between Beachy Head (Fl (2) 20s) and Royal Sovereign (Fl 20s), sailed overnight.

Watches changed, Dave and Dale did the 02:00 to 06:00 watch, Rob and I the others. I got up at 05:00 thinking we were on 3 hr watches overnight, to find something else had been agreed. I think we were all a bit tired. Fog lifted at dusk. We were overtaken by a Bavaria 39, also motor sailing, and closer to the wind.

We had to tack out to regain our sea room. Breeze backed further South, so we continued on a Westerly course all night, motor sailing with main and jib.



Sun 11/07/10 Morning bright and sunny, breeze good to sail in, so engine off near Owers! Course to the Solent. Avoided big ships and steered for Portsmouth Harbour. Lots of traffic.



Into Gosport Marina, another tricky manoeuvre by Jim, with breeze and tide making it difficult. Stern line on, and bows came round. Good crew work. Rob rustled up some canapés, and the three crewmen packed, and jumped ship! Dave and I took the Gosport Ferry to Portsmouth,



then trains to Swansea and Havant. Rob and Jim went ashore with Dale, who lives near the marina, to chill out for a bit, and then motored Morwenna to Poole overnight, arriving 06:00 Monday.

What a great trip!

