

Ditty Bag – Younger-Members' Spot

Since our last dip into the Ditty Bag, we have had our first fitting out dinner which was held in Central London and featured an evening of darts at Flight Club Bloomsbury.

The new Younger Member awards were announced and these will be presented at the laying up event in the winter.

However, the main excitement - as you may have read already in this edition - has been the Saint-Malo event.

Spread across two boats – *Rely* and *Cygnnet of London* - eight youngers crossed the Channel from the East Coast to Saint-Malo and another six travelled by ferry.

Below this brief round-up is a log of *Cygnnet of London's* channel crossing written up by brothers, Ed and Will Roberts (East Coast) for Gaffers Log.

We all enjoyed the festivities and sampling the cidre, biere, vin rouge and moules frites; well who wouldn't!

The weather wasn't great for sailing at Saint-Malo but, on the Sunday, the sun was shining and many boats ventured beyond the harbour including the Smacks boat, *Papa Stour*, gaff-rigged *Wayfarer*, *Papa Little* and radical *Dirty Girty* which I had the joy of crewing on.

It was a perfect way to end the festival with a brilliant sail, a lunch stop in Dinard for delicious sandwiches made by Clare Roberts, then sailing about in front of the walls of Saint-Malo.

It looks like our next general gathering will be at the East Coast's Swallows & Amazons event plus a social gathering in Exeter (date to be confirmed).

We do get about!

Faversham to Saint-Malo via the Channel by Ed and Will Roberts

Setting off after work on Friday we (Ed and Will) caught the train to Faversham, before travelling by road to Ramsgate to catch up with Simon Harding and *Cygnnet* who had a head start.

After bumping into the skipper and crew of a returning Dunkirk Little Ship and OGA member, *Cachelot*, we clambered aboard *Cygnnet* and swiftly departed.



Younger Members in OGA Tower. Photo by Georgina Tall



The crew of Rely



Cygnet of London built in 1906. Photo by Simon Harding

After safely navigating the inner passage we steamed south dodging crab and lobster pots in the dark. Having lost the tide on the corner we put into Dover.

After only the briefest of stops, at dawn we were back out under engine pushing through fog, pot markers and into the wind - for a surprisingly lengthy trip around the corner and over to Eastbourne.

Once tied up we followed the skippers motto of "gear before beer", so hastily tidied up and rushed out in search of a pint or two.

With a foul forecast (and prior engagements) on Sunday, boat work and planning were top of the agenda. Fair weather windows were few but the chances of getting across the Channel were on the up.

Locking out from Eastbourne as Sunday became Monday we set off with sails up immediately, working against wind and tide. But conditions gradually picked up as the day wore on and the wind veered. And then the sun came out to play; very welcome.

We made Cherbourg at nightfall, navigating a galaxy of entry lights.

Another lay-over of a few hours enabled a galley restock and a catch up on rest. And we planned our passage through the Alderney Race following an inside route of the Channel Islands down to Saint-Malo.

The final stretch of the journey saw us benefit from the tidal back eddies out of Cherbourg, careful timing the corner to Alderney Race at slack water, followed by a storming sail (look, no engine!) past Jersey.

We won hours beyond our expectations and enjoyed the dividend of a stress-free afternoon as the tide turned and progress slowed.

Nonetheless we made Saint-Malo by 22:30, with a final quick nap to await the first lock-in of the day 00:34, Thursday June 5.

Ditty Bag is prepared by Georgina Tall, Younger Members Secretary