

Oostende Cruise In Company 16th to 19th June 2023

Link for pictures: <https://clipchamp.com/watch/Zeeidz1B5S0>

The 4th trip of this year's 2023 Cruise in Company was to Oostende, the land of Seagulls the size of dogs, the smell of freshly caught Shrimps, the arguing of fish wives and of course, Moules with Frites.

Most of the fleet departed Woolverstone into a spangling North Sea with 'wall to wall' blue sky and a gentle breeze, with three of the eight strong fleet making the passage for the first time. The 14-hour Pick n Mix crossing had something for everyone including cruising chutes, motoring, a bit of ship dodging, egg mayo sandwiches and scotch eggs.

By 7pm local time the fleet had tied up at the Royal North Sea Yacht Club basin into premium berths, right under the fish market and next to the Harbour wall, adorned with mussels the size of jam jars. In true Cruise in Company style some of the fleet made their way to the club house for some Lady steak, red wine and onto a well-earned sleep.

Morning broke to the sound of roaring seagulls; some sailors went swimming off the beach and others explored around the town. Late afternoon the fleet limbered up for the Oostende Beer Festival and, what felt like a school trip, eventually found the Tram, the right stop, the beach and the beer. The Beer festival was about quality and not quantity; a lesson that won't be easily forgotten for some. By 6pm the homing beacons of the well-oiled fleet went off and somehow managed to return and descend on the Royal North Sea Yacht Club for supper where our virgin passage makers were celebrated and rewarded with flora for their efforts.

Sunday was a rest day for some whilst others ventured back on to public transport to visit the most beautiful city of Brugge for lunch and a walk. By 7pm, the fleet had regrouped again, this time on Anusha for more evening drinks, laughter and chat. The focus soon turned to the return passage and which weather forecast suited the fleet best, only to discover that none of them were particularly appetizing. In preparation, the fleet put in some pre-planned, ready baked reefs and set off early Monday morning into the lumpy and gusty North Sea. By 7pm, the fleet were safely home and berthed after a rewarding days sail.

Our thanks go to the Royal North Sea Yacht Club for their hospitality, our maiden voyagers for their endurance and our more experienced sailors for their wisdom and advice.

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