



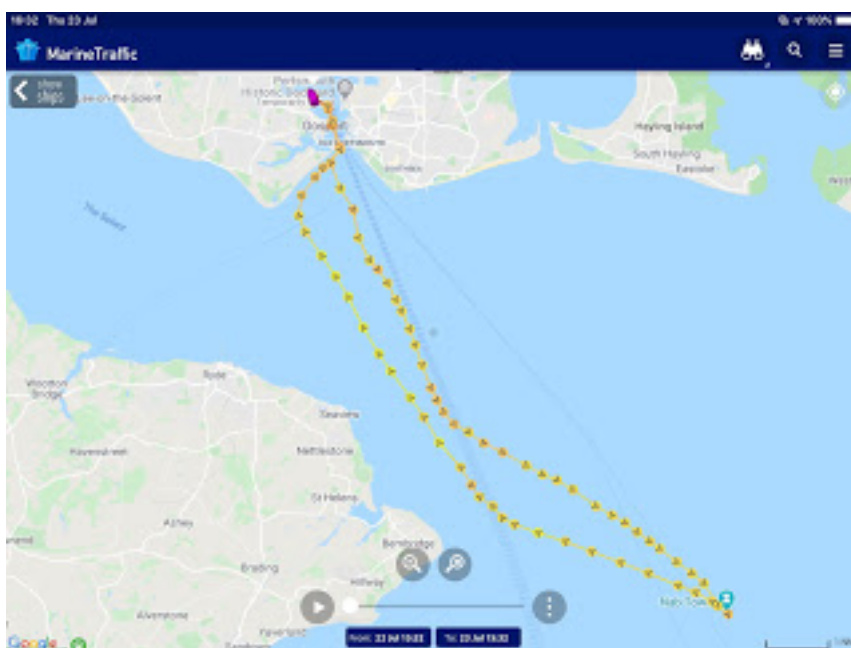
## Nab Tower and Back

August 2020

Crew: Andrew

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If you're day sailing and only wish to spend four or five hours out there's no need to rush down to Gosport. Usually, arrival was timed for about 10am, this allowed a stress-free drive after the traffic had died down; not that there was much this year. The weather forecast for this trip was for a sunny day but with potentially, quite strong winds 15-25 knots. That's well within the scope of the Genoa so the

jib and it's inner stay wouldn't be needed.

After a quick cup of coffee, we set off at 10:30 with a couple of hours before the tide turned. Naturally as it was close to high tide we could leave the harbour by going over the Hamilton Bank so were soon hoisting sails in 16-20 knots of south westerly wind. Erring on the side of caution we put in the first

reef for the main and the Genoa. This was just as well as, by the time approached the forts, we had gusts of well over 20 knots over the deck. Fortunately the wind was well south of west so we were not far off a beam reach which soon took us through the forts and on towards Bembridge.



Off Bembridge there were several ships anchored, as is often the case, mainly gas or oil carriers. This is where they can safely wait before entering the Solent and Southampton Water, not surprisingly it's known as St Helens Anchorage. We transmit our position details on AIS and have set up a monitoring watch on Marine Traffic so that when we leave and arrive at a port details are sent by email to shoreside contacts. This is fine usually but when going round the Nab, extra emails get sent as we enter then leave St Helens anchorage both on the way out and the way back, some tracking system!

By this time we'd got the wind vane steering working the wind had gradually increased in strength



and we were powering along. Although the boat is well balanced and needs little helm most of the time, occasionally a firm touch is needed which the Neptune system certainly has! It's a joy to be using nothing other than wind and water power to both sail and keep on track, so much quieter than the irritating buzz of the autohelm as it tries to hold a course with varying degrees of success.

Once clear of the Island the wind had piped up to a good 25 knots so the second reef in the main was taken in, so much easier with two line reefing! After a short fight with the Genoa that too was tamed and the sail area reduced. In these conditions Lively Levante was a joy to sail, stable, fast and relatively dry.

In no time the stub of Nab Tower that had been on the horizon grew to it's full size as we approached. It's not the most beautiful object since it's rebuild in 2013 becoming more squat,

losing much of its superstructure. It's functional and certainly looks smart but with wave heights increasing, we didn't want to examine it too closely.

Heading back the wind was right on the beam and with the tide now flowing under us in our direction we were ready for a bit of a sleigh ride. We were not disappointed, soon achieving some impressive speeds. The log had been under reading a bit, as usual, so the 5.8 knots registered must have been well over 6 knots in reality. The tide would not have been more than a knot and a half at that time so we not that far away from hull speed of 6.8 kn based on the GPS speed over the ground of 8.1.



All good things have to come to an end and it was all too soon that the wind dropped back to a sedate 20 knots as we passed into the lee of the Island, the sea state dropped too so it was time for a spot of lunch. Navigation was easy, just miss both forts and head for Gilkicker whilst keeping an eye out for shipping. On this record-breaking trip there were few other ships about but that wasn't usually the case, I'd been kept quite busy on other trips keeping clear of all manner of naval and commercial shipping.

In what seemed like no time at all we had passed Gilkicker were adjacent to the Dive Tower with NCI Gosport ahead. Sails were



dropped and we motored in listening to channel 11 which was much preferable to channel 16 with its endless radio checks. Motoring into the harbour was a bit slow as it often is when the tides flowing out but soon enough we were safely tied up in Royal Clarence Marina once more.

We'd been out for just over five hours and covered a fair distance, well over 20 miles although it seemed further.

The good thing about a Nab trip compared with Osbourne Bay is that you really do feel that you're out offshore, or at least out of the Solent!