

Tim and Sheila Hopper, co-owners of Lionheart, a Moody 31, relocated from Faversham to the Isle of Anglesey, last summer but are continuing their membership of Hollowshore CC. Here Tim tells how he brought Lionheart to her new home, and how he and Sheila are settling in

A Welsh Adventure for Lionheart

The trip up here by boat was an adventure. A couple of offers of help from fellow members never materialised, and in the end I hired a professional crew from Falmouth, and luckily all worked out very well indeed.

I had met Benjamin Schmidt in July 2016. Ben's homeland is Luxemburg and he is fluent in English, German, French and some everyday Greek. It would be his first time leading the sailing and general management of a boat as skipper, and the trip would provide a useful advancement of his own seafaring qualifications.

This arrangement suited us both.

One other competent crew member, Ms Elle Demaus, joined us on Ben's recommendation, so the crew now totalled three, including myself. For safety reasons this was considered the minimum number needed for the longer passages entailing some night-time sailing for which we were all experienced. Ms Demaus assisted competently with watch-keeping, sail trimming and helming and was an excellent cook to boot.

Ben Schmidt's attention to safety greatly impressed me at the outset and especially his attention to detail throughout his engagement.

This was first noticed during the crew training and equipment trials, held in the river estuary which preceded our departure from Falmouth. Ben is polite and sociable, able to command and instruct and in my opinion very well accomplished in boat handling and navigation.

Our fitness as a crew was confirmed as we voyaged confidently around Land's End from Newlyn and visited the charming port of St Ives to rest overnight. The following day saw us moored off Lundy Isle in the Severn Estuary with time to explore ashore. The following day we crossed the Bristol Channel to Mildford Haven, at times under both sail and motor.

The final passages included two crossings of the Irish Sea, both partly in full darkness which was calculated by Ben to use the changes of wind direction and tide to maximum advantage. His chosen passage plan via Arklow modestly increased the total journey distance, but the benefits gained were that we could undertake both crossings under sail for most of the way, which we did in record time and speed for *Lionheart*. For the purpose of the boat delivery we logged over 375 nautical miles.

For any club member needing help with a similar quite daunting trip, I would say that Ben has a thorough knowledge of collision regulations and lights, and would fit in well with delivery crews on long trips. He has a strong natural ability to lead and, indeed, skipper a sailing vessel of the size and kind as described.

As to Sheila and I: we are both fine and enjoying boundless fresh air and fabulous views. Our new home is perched on a low slope overlooking a shallow tidal bay towards Holy Island, with views of the ferries and yachts sailing in and out.

Lionheart is, of course, out of the water, her swinging mooring in the harbour vacated like all the others in case big ones crash right over the breakwater during the winter.

T.J.Hopper

