



The 'cat in a bag' goes to sea!

Jens Kuhn

Jens fulfils a long-held ambition – to sail round one of the Humber Forts

What do you do when all GP14 events are cancelled because of a nasty virus and you're getting bored with sailing up and down the river in a Mirror? Well, you plan your own sea expedition!

Ever since I visited my wife's parents in Cleethorpes for the first time ten years ago, I had the urge to someday do some sailing there – ideally to one of the old Humber forts. Obviously, everybody will tell you that it's a death sentence – the Humber currents are fierce, the tides are weird and the water isn't even properly blue. So who would possibly be out of his mind enough to attempt such an endeavour?

Sailing round Haile Sands Fort

Well, it never hurts to at least do a little bit of planning. Having bought a chart of the area (actually more as research for a book Tracy is writing than any other reason) and combining that with online weather and tide information I identified the Wednesday of my one week's holiday as a good day to have a go.

"...it never hurts to at least do a little bit of planning"

The local sailing club's website states that there is a window of two hours either side of high tide when they feel it is sailable. I narrowed that down a bit further and decided to start about an hour before high tide to be on the safe side. The wind forecast was for 11–14 knots, more or less offshore. That looked like it should be enough to get to the fort fairly quickly and then have a chilly beat back in. There was also a *Plan B*: if the tide didn't let me beat back to where I'd launched I would reach down to a beach



The 'cat in a bag' has Haile Sands Fort in sight

further south, towards the sailing club where my wife and father-in-law would be able to pick me up.

Arriving at the beach and starting to assemble the 'cat in a bag' immediately drew the attention of a member of the local sailing club who told me that he sails – wait for it – obviously a GP14. There were two at the club. I left him in conversation with my father-in-law. I did have a tide to catch after all. Just before I launched the boat, I saw a bigger catamaran coming from the sailing club further down the beach and sweeping in a nice curve past the sandbanks which were at that point almost covered and only identifiable by the surf crashing over them. With that cat nicely having confirmed the way out, I was ready to go.

There had been a bit of a blow the day before and my main concern at that point was whether there would be a considerable leftover swell to bother me, but with this part of the estuary being

well under the lee of Spurn Point the swell was nothing more than pleasant. After all I did want to sail on the sea so a little bit of chop was rather welcome.

"which ...looked further away than I'd imagined"

The 'cat in a bag' did well and with this wind I could sail almost in a straight line towards Haile Sands Fort (which, to be honest, at that point looked further away than I'd imagined). Having sailed about half way I decided to turn into the wind and try a little beat, just to see how strong the wind felt on that tack. Finding it clearly manageable, I resumed my course to the fort. I sailed around it, taking time to take some extra pictures on the lee side of it where the wind was less, and then settled for the beat home.

Back to shore

At first, I felt that this would be rather hard work, as the wind wasn't as steady as I'd wished and I couldn't lay a course

even for the spires of distant Grimsby. But soon enough I got the hang of tacking with the wind shifts rather than based on my imagined layline, and that made a huge difference – well we should know that from racing shouldn't we? But it's never more apparent than when you are sailing alone and can really dwell on it. In a race, there are too many things to look out for and think of – if nothing else all the other boats going past you...

"...much longer and I would have had to drag the boat rather a long way over the sand..."

At that point I actually was having a rather nice time, and wished I could go on for longer. But I had people waiting ashore, so I tacked my way towards them, the wind dropping the closer I got. When I was about 100 metres out the big cat I'd seen earlier came back in, reaching along the channel behind me towards the sailing club. And once I was ashore I realised that the tide had gone out quite a bit already – the sandbanks had started to appear and the beach had become rather bigger too. So my timing was just right, much longer and I would have had to drag the boat rather a long way over the sand to get back home.

Photos opposite:

Top: Jens and the 'cat in a bag' ready to go

Bottom: Close up view of the fort



Hotter or colder?

Mike Craggs

You are all probably aware of wind chill and its effects, but we also need to understand the heat index. First just a quick recap on wind chill.

Wind chill index

This index does not just tell us what the temperature is but what it actually *feels* like on a cool day.

On a cold day we humans create a thin layer of warm air close to our skin. A brisk wind can whisk this away leaving us feeling much colder. How much colder is expressed in the wind chill.

As the wind increases so does the chill.

That is why a strong southerly wind can feel just as cold as a light northerly in winter. This is why



it is sensible to wear layers when out in cold weather. They trap more air, which helps us to keep warm and prevent hypothermia.

Heat index

It is just as important to be aware of heat as it is of cold. In recent years we seem to have been experiencing high temperatures more frequently in the UK. Combine these high temperatures with high humidity and problems can arise.

The heat index, also known as the apparent temperature, is what the temperature feels like to the human body when relative humidity is combined with the air temperature.

The body cools by sweating. If we have high humidity the air is already saturated and sweat cannot evaporate from our skin and cool us down so easily. Then the body can overheat and cause heatstroke, a very dangerous condition. The same



can happen if you are wearing a full wetsuit/dry suit and there is nowhere for the sweat to evaporate.

Take care also when sailing on hot days with low humidity. You may not realise you are sweating and losing body fluids so it is important to keep drinking water to avoid dehydration. It is best to drink sips of water on any day it is hot with either low or high humidity. Take a bottle of water with you so you can top up between races.

2ND

**HEAT
TEMP**

To find the heat index on the Club weather station: Press 2nd (bottom left of console) and then TEMP (HEAT).

Wind chill is found in the same way: Press 2nd then WIND (CHILL)

How did you spend the Lockdown?

Peter Tooze

Peter Tooze kept himself busy during lockdown by using his garage clutter to make additions to SouseN II

I had finished securing the water ballast tanks at the front of the boat to counter my own weight at the back, the central thwart which also supports the main sheet being in the way of my moving further forward.

Putting weight into a sailing dinghy would seem to be counterproductive but the boat as it is weighs just under 60kg, less than a half of a GP. Then along came the lockdown and no sailing and being a septuagenarian this will mean little time out for the foreseeable future and so what to do?

A project came to mind, initially, to build another boat. However my current boat filled the garage and every set of plans I looked at meant building a garage extension first! I put that on the back burner (though I still like the look of the US Cat-boats. I have even bought Will Garden's definitive book).

Decisions...

Looking at my own boat, I think she is a little underpowered with her 64 sq. ft. sail in the generally light winds we experience on the river, particularly up towards York. I costed a new 89 sq. ft. sail plus the selected timbers for the longer mast, yard and boom. When I added in ropes, fittings and varnish etc. it all worked out at about £500.

"A project came to mind, initially, to build another boat."

Whilst standing in the clutter of my garage I spied an old mast and boom from a long gone project to restore a Heron dinghy. Too small for a main sail I thought but what about adding a self-tacking mizzen.

So I now had a small mast and boom but what about a sail? Years ago I used to windsurf and could never bring myself to sell off my 60 sq. ft. sail. However, today I decided I was prepared to sacrifice it for a mizzen sail. This offcut (defined by the size of the Heron mast and boom) would add another 18 sq. feet to my own sail giving me 82 sq. feet of canvas. There would be tuning issues as the likelihood of moving the centre of effort further back would likely give her a weather helm but I have already added a larger rudder blade for the river to steer out of this. I also have the option of slightly tilting the mainsail forward to move the centre of effort away from the stern.

Getting started

I now decided my *modus operandi*. The primary objective was to keep me occupied in mind and body for two to three months. With all the materials in hand this project would probably last about a week. I decided to only order a part or fixing on the day I needed it. Whenever I am short of anything, for example *two*



"There she is." SouseN II awaiting 'sea' trials

brass screws, an inch and a half, size eights, I order them on eBay or Amazon. I then wait 4 or 5 days for delivery, fit them, and carry on until I am short of the next item. This largely worked well although on one day I received a backlog of nine items; possibly the postman had twigged?

Basically, I had to create a new mast foot in front of the smaller stern deck, and reinforce the deck with two pillars to take the strains (see photo right showing the added obstruction of the hatch).



I then had to cut my sail and using a home-made 'sail makers seam rubber' (a block of wood rounded at one end), hold it in place with sail makers tape before stitching it up using the amazing *Speedy Stitcher Sewing Awl* (I'm not joking, its a great bit of kit). All training was provided courtesy of the internet.

To cut a long story short, there she is. If the new ballast tanks work then this will be trialled as soon as we get back to normal.



We are sailing again — but not as we know it! YRISC Covid-19 guidelines apply

You can only sail if you can launch and recover alone or with members of your household/bubble. If possible, please come in clothing you can sail in. Access to the clubhouse is permitted only to use toilets and to access equipment. Social distancing and hygiene recommendations apply at all times.

Remember that sailing is at your own risk. Keep an eye on the forecast, and on the conditions on the day, and only sail within your capabilities.