

**Trip Report** – Trish Jennett, from Brigantine (Inc.), Kingston, Ontario, Canada  
July 11-24, 2010

I knew my trip had officially begun when I finally met up with Kate Van Welter at the Toronto airport on July 11<sup>th</sup>. It was great to finally meet the person who I had been planning this trip with for months. After we had checked in and said our goodbyes, Kate and I were off to Belgium.

After a long overnight flight we touched down in London and met up with Emma from ASTO to get more information about our trip. Emma was kind enough to take us on a memorable sightseeing trip of some of London's famous locations on the way to another airport for our flight for Antwerp, Belgium. After landing in Antwerp, Kate and I were on our own to get to the port. Our directions were very good, and it was our first taste of a new culture and test of our navigational skills. After taking a bus, train, tram and walking, we arrived at the port and found the John Laing and were introduced to the crew and sea staff including Captain James Boyce. That night, we all got to watch the fireworks in Antwerp and prepared to spend the next week together. So much had happened in our first 24 hours, it was hard to comprehend that our next adventure was just about to begin.

The next morning, along with other excited crew, we set off for a docking close to the starting line in preparation for the next day. Along the way, instead of doing the parade of sail with most of the other boats, we ended up stuck in a lock with about 15 boats in our class. It was great making friends with our competitors and seeing what they were like, since many of them were from different countries. After leaving the lock we continued our journey travelling with the rest of the boats again and even though all of the boats were motoring, it was still amazing to be travelling amongst so many big ships.

After docking for the night in Holland, we proceeded to the starting line of the race. It was spectacular seeing all the boats with their sails up, lined along the horizon. Since our vessel was in Class C, we were able to see the big impressive boats in Classes A & B set off. Soon after we set off, we noticed a big storm on the horizon that we were sailing directly into. We were soon hit by the 40 knot squall, just when I got on watch. It was exciting to experience such intense weather, unlike anything I'd seen in the Great Lakes. The storm quickly passed and we were able to see the lights of all the other boats again.

When we all woke up the next morning, we couldn't see a single boat on the horizon, we only saw the odd oil rig off in the distance. Since we were going

downwind the whole race, we weren't very busy while on watch, so we focused on learning how to use winches under the direction of First Mate Ben Whinnett, and changing the foresail sometimes, depending on the wind. It was a great opportunity to get to know the rest of the crew, learn where they were from and tell them about Canada. The most exciting part about being on deck was the massive waves we were moving with, and how they made the ship bob up and down.

After four days of sailing downwind, the wind died on the last day for a bit, and we were left bobbing around off the coast of Denmark. A few hours later, the wind picked up and we crossed the finish line at about 1 AM. We had a big celebration on deck with all the crew then we quickly pulled into Skagen, Denmark for a good night's sleep. We were all proud of the job we had done, finishing the race in good time. We spent the next day sightseeing around Skagen, finishing the day with some football on the beach. The next morning, we sailed down the Hals, Denmark, which is at the mouth of the river that leads to Aalborg. There were other boats in Hals from the race, so we got to see some of our friends again. In the morning, we got to do some more sightseeing before we left to sail upriver to Aalborg.

Once we arrived in Aalborg, the atmosphere was incredible. We toured lots of other boats and met many other sailors from all over the world. Some of the crew went to the Aalborg Zoo, and some of them went to the Viking museum. Of all the time that we were in Aalborg, the best part was all the live entertainment, and the general festivities going on around the river. On the last night, we had one last chance to see all our friends at the Crew party, before we had to head home the next day - lots of great memories.

The next morning, we packed up all of our stuff, said our goodbyes, and left for the airport. Most of the crew was flying home, so I was on a flight with some of them to Copenhagen, Denmark, before Kate and I set off on our flight to London. When we landed in London, we checked into our hotel and prepared for our flight home the next day. The next morning we made a quick trip into London for some souvenirs and back to the airport to check into our flight. When we boarded the flight home, we knew our trip was almost over, and our adventure together was coming to an end. Even though the trip is over, I still know that I had an amazing time and made incredible friends from many different places, all thanks to ASTO and the James Myatt Trust Fund.