

# HUNTER'S YARD



Newsletter of the Friends of the Hunter Fleet



Presentation to Les and Jean, September 2016 (*Photo by Kathy Simms*)

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## Editorial

Welcome to Issue 58. Once again it has been a struggle to fit everything in; there is always so much news and contributions. Long may it continue!

There have recently been big changes on both the Friends committee and in the Trustees and we have lost from both committees key people who have shaped and ensured the continuation of Hunters Yard. (See p.8 for details of all the Goings....and Comings). One result of these changes is that there are now vacancies on the Friend's committee. I'm sure there are those among our members who would like to step up to the challenge of helping to ensure the future of this amazing boatyard. We look forward to hearing from you!

The Friends Autumn event went off well on a beautiful sunny and windy day, with good participation in all the various activities. On the following Monday evening there was an exhibition at the Yard of the paintings (and others) which had been completed during the Autumn Event, and as with so many other activities, the Yard had exactly the right ambience for such an event, which was very well attended.

Sadly another sailing season is now over and all the boats are in the boatsheds and the log books removed. All the 2016 log book prize winners will be announced in the next newsletter. *Christine*

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## Chairmen's Ramble Autumn 2016

Once again Autumn is upon us, the sailing/boat hire season is coming to a close, and Hunters fleet is about to be laid up for the winter. When Ian, the foreman boat builder and his colleagues, perform the annual sleight of hand by squeezing what seems to be a quart of boats into the pint bottle of the boat sheds, whilst leaving enough space between them for maintenance. 500 years ago he would have been in danger of being burnt for witchcraft!

Those of you who attended our Autumn picnic may have noticed *Hustler 3* has already been taken out of the water for essential maintenance; this year it's her turn for the hull to be scraped back to bare wood, damaged planks replaced and other more time consuming work over and above the usual scrub out, and minor repairs followed by a rub down, and application of a fresh coat of varnish which all of the boats receive each year.

Thanks to excellent weather the Autumn event was very successful with full bookings on all the yachts for both morning and afternoon sails. During the lunch break the former Chairman Les Gee, and Membership Secretary, Jennifer Mack, both of whom retired at the AGM, were presented with, for Les, a painting of the *Lovely Ladies*, and for Jennifer, a book on flower illustration, as a mark of our appreciation for their contribution over many years, to the Friends Committee.

As I commented on at some length in my last ramble, this year's AGM was a robust affair focused around the fact that in order

to counter the gradual drop in hire numbers, the Trustees are considering the trial installation of a motor on one of the 4 berth yachts. As far as I am aware this matter has yet to be finally resolved.

There have been changes in the Friends Committee which has left vacancies which need to need to be filled. It seems to be a widespread problem amongst voluntary organisations such as ours, where much of the work falls to a small group of people, who, whilst retaining the same enthusiasm and commitment to the work, as they grow older the drain on their time and energy becomes increasingly noticeable and thoughts of standing down become increasingly attractive. The Friends Committee finds itself in this position and would like any members who feel they can contribute in a positive way to consider putting themselves forward as candidates.

There have been changes to the Committee of Trustees as well, with the retirement of the chairman Brian Read who has devoted a large portion of his life to Broads matters. We look forward to working with the new chairman.

I have been watching the video on boat handling which is sent out with each hire booking, together with Les Gee's past rambles on sailing hunter boats on the broads. Taken together they reminded me why I became involved in the Friends in the first place; sailing beautiful, traditionally built boats specifically designed for these waters, properly maintained and operated by people who care.

We have all had perfect days with clear

skies, favourable warm winds wafting us along past reed lined banks to our chosen destination (the pub?) where we find a suitable mooring in exactly the right place. Just as we have all had cold, wet, miserable days with contrary winds trying hard to blow us into the nearest reed bed whilst water runs down the mainsheet and straight up your arm, down your neck/wellies, and the sails, sheets and spars insist on trying to beat you about the head/arms/legs etc., the quant pole/mop falls off the side of the boat, and the crockery/pots/pans/clothing/binoculars etc. careering around inside the boat singing a song that says you should have gone to Ibiza this year. But we still come back for more!

It's far too early, however, this is the last opportunity I have this year, Happy Christmas and see you in the new year.

*Rodney Longhurst.*

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY, 2017**

**AGM.....Saturday, 22 April**

**Autumn Event.....Saturday,**

**30 September**

### **PHOTO COMPETITION, 2016**

The winner was Dennis Verdon. See the next issue of the Newsletter for the winning entry and details of the 2017 competition.

### **NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Wanted to help maintain the thriving Friends organisation.

### **Membership News**

I was so looking forward to meeting Friends who do not already know me at the Autumn Picnic. I would like to apologise for not being able to attend on the day.

I understand that everyone had a fantastic day. The weather was extremely kind to us and blessed us with a good sailing wind! Over 70 people attended and were able to spend a pleasant couple of hours either sailing in one of 'Percy's Ladies' or a motor boat cruise supplied by the Nancy Oldfield Trust. There was also the fabulous wildlife walk run by Jeremy Hall on which they had hoped to find the rare raft spider. He had also organised pond dipping in the dyke by the wood at the end of Horsefen Road which proved to be greatly enjoyed by everyone.

I know that many of you were enthralled whilst watching works of art being produced by Linda Matthews' painting master-class. All in all a jolly good day was had by all.

Our membership numbers are still heading gently towards the 1000 mark. I am always appreciative of the enthusiasm of everyone at the Yard in encouraging new people to join the Friends when they visit. We have had a few website issues which has meant I haven't been able to post as many items as I have wanted to over the summer. I believe these have now been resolved, so as they say 'watch this space'

May I again thank you all for your generous support and take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

*Louise Hopkinson*

## **Friends of the Hunters Fleet Two Day Sails June 4th to 9th 2017**

For 2017 we return once more to The Bure and the village of Horning. On the way we shall visit Malthouse Broad as well as the usual stop at Cockshoot Broad Nature Reserve to get a glimpse of the elusive Kingfisher that flies past the hide when our backs are turned!

If the wind obliges then there is the possibility to enjoy a sail on Hoveton Little Broad. Philip Bray and Neil Hopkinson will have the *Hustlers* ready to sail by 10:00hrs so that we can get two full days of sailing or quanting if the wind is light.

When we arrive at Horning you will be staying at The Moorhen Bed and Breakfast and eating at one of the restaurants close by. The price per person for two days with one of "Percy's Ladies" as well as Bed and Breakfast at The Moorhen will be £220 per person.\*If you would like to join us on two days of great sailing on The Bure then give Neil a ring on 01455 203167 or 07930910870. You can also contact him on neil@impalaadventures.co.uk

*\*Price includes boat hire and bed and breakfast only*

## **2017 Hunters Friends Holland Trip June 17 - 26**

We will do some sailing at sea visiting and exploring the Frisian islands, also staying at some lovely old towns rich in history and culture. You'll see and enjoy parts of the Netherlands few visitors see...Hidden Holland! This year we sailed on an excellent ship, *de Ideaal* which was so well liked by everyone that for 2017 I have reserved a week on her, but in June this time around midsummer day. *Ideaal's* cabins are spacious, the saloon comfortable, the skipper and crew friendly and attentive..

**The plan:** On Saturday we travel by Stena overnight ferry from Harwich to Hoek van Holland, then on Sunday by train to Harlingen, the ship's port, visiting the historic city of Groningen en-route.

On Monday we sail across the Wadden Zee to the Island of Texel where we spend Tuesday as well. Texel is the largest of the Frisian islands with much of interest apart from those famous Texel sheep!

On Wednesday we then sail on into what was the Zuider Zee visiting Enkhuizen, very interesting in it's own rights, but where there is also a fast rail connection to nearby Amsterdam, Hoorn, Haarlem etc, all within an hour's travel, within easy reach for a full day's visit on Thursday. On Friday we would sail on to Urk, an old fishing town and from there to Workum. On Saturday returning to Harlingen for our last night on board. On Sunday morning there will be the possibility to break the journey to make an afternoon visit to one of a number of interesting cities on the journey, maybe Delft, or Leiden or Rotterdam before the overnight crossing to Harwich.

Zeeland option: I am planning to offer a few days trip extension to Zeeland for those who would like a longer holiday, staying in Middelburg in Nieuwe Doelen hotel.

Costs will be dependent on Euro exchange rate, likely to be approx £170pp for the Rail/Sail ferry crossing and £400 pp for 7 nights B&B on board *Ideaal*, based on 17 people in the group. Since I will need to make booking confirmations as soon as possible please confirm your interest without delay, before Christmas. As before payments can be made in stages, the ferry cost at booking time and approx 50% of *Ideaal* costs in February and then in May.

*For more information and to book please contact me by: Phone or text: 0797 486 7301*

*E-mail: willyh@phonecoop.coop Post: Willy Hoedeman, 7 Howe Hill Close, York, YO26 4SN*

## Diary of Hunters Friends Friesland & Zeeland Trip, 2016

**Sunday.** After our overnight crossing we broke the train journey to Harlingen to visit the city of Leiden. There we were met by Alexander de Vos, a Dutch Friend of Hunters who has created his own Historic boatyard . A few years back he sailed with Hunters and so enjoyed it he said he'll be back on the Broads again soon. He treated us to a trip to his yard by a delightful little boat along the picturesque canals of the town. At the yard his *Boeier jacht* is being restored with timber from fallen local oak trees, the trunks were dragged to the yard by horse-power, the traditional way!

Our ship in Harlingen, *Ideaal* was spacious and comfortable and thanks to Sanja and Ana, friends of Willy who did the on-board catering, we soon enjoyed our first dinner on board, joined by skipper Arie-Jan and mate Killian.

**Monday.** We sailed our ship *Ideaal* to the Frisian island of Vlieland in a stiff breeze. We were kept busy tacking into the North-Westerly, pretty hard work on a big boat, what with handling thick heavy rope-work sheets as thick as a lumberjack's thumb, backstays and the winching of heavy lee-boards. Many more large traditional sails afloat were about, a wonderful sight!



**Tuesday.** We had a whole day on this fascinating unspoilt island, car-free but buzzing with whole families on bikes. Most of us hired bikes ourselves and rode off to explore the village and cycle routes though the dunes. Some even went swimming off the wide sandy beaches! We found a remnant of WW2 in the square near the wonderful 1647 church: the Bristol Pegasus engine and prop of a Handley Page Hampden bomber, crashed after a raid.

One of the joys of Vlieland was to buy cured herring and smoked salmon from a street stall and the wide variety of pancakes! In the busy harbour amongst the many Dutch modern and traditional sails I spied one Cornish Shrimper and one Drascombe Lugger, both Dutch flagged but none from England. We sailed away early evening for a night of great excitement! Having sailed a few hours into the dark we dropped anchor in shallow water to experience 'droogvallen'. This is hugely popular on the Wadden Sea with mile upon mile of tidal sand flats. Our low tide was at 4am. Most of our party were happy to be woken at that hour to climb overboard and go for a stroll miles from land under the stars on the sea bottom, even the two ship's dogs! And just after breakfast at 9 we were bowling along again in a force 5-6 with about half a fathom under the keel. Exciting!

For two days (**Thursday, Friday**) our hired

mimibus took us to places of charm and beautyeg Workum and Hindeloopen. Alan, Keith and I explored the interesting old port of Harlingen with rows of old cottages dating from 1570, and classic trading warehouses for goods to and from “Rusland”, “Polen”, Schotland, “London”, in large bold letters across the fronts of the buildings. Later we watched the progress with the construction of the C16 exploration vessel *Willem Barentz*. The original overwintered on Nova Zembla, the first of many attempts to tame the Northern passage. I also discovered, and was very much taken with, British yacht *Carina*, of very unusual rig lying further along the quay from ‘*Ideaal*’ a fine wooden wishbone schooner built in Faversham in the 20’s, since when it has passed through many owners and has sailed the Atlantic.

**Friday.** To Sneek for the start of festivities surrounding the week-long sailing races, including watching some very exiting Skutsje racing at Earnewald. It blew a bit and the boats were racing along mostly on one ear or the other, watched by hundreds from the waters edge. Later in the evening there was the traditional illuminated sail past and stupendous fireworks.



**Saturday.** To Zeeland and Middelburg-

another fine port city with canals filled with boats and lined with C18 merchant’s houses. Our party stayed in hotel Nieuwe Doelen, very comfortable with easy walks to station and town centre, and with the bells of the Lange Jan tower never silent for long!

**Sunday:** We sailed in *YE36*, one of the beautiful oak-built Hoogaars shrimpers now owned by a Trust. Again a good breeze, so we bowled along in fine fashion. We did a capable job of crewing, rewarded ourselves with a lovely lunch on the water front, oysters in my case! Then we explored the many historic delights of Veere, a beautiful old merchant’s town which for centuries had a resident population of Scots who were granted merchants trading rights.

**Monday**(our last day).A visit to Arnemuiden, old fishing port and home of C.A.Meerman boatyard, builders of Hoogaars boats for 200 years, now restored and owned by a Trust.



We were given a fabulous welcome with refreshments, introductory talk and toured around sheds and yard until it was time to board the train back to the Hook, the ferry and home. Another inspiring, adventurous and thoroughly enjoyable holiday.

*Jayne Tracey*



## Friends, Trustees and Yard News

Presentation pictures by Kathy Simms

**GOINGS AND COMINGS, in the Friends Committee, Trustees and the Yard.**

### Friends Committee

*There have been changes recently on the Friends committee involving people who have given invaluable service to Hunters Yard. At the Autumn Event we made presentations to Les and Jean Gee and to Jennifer Mack. Friends chairman Rodney Longhurst presented Les with an oil painting of Hunter boats by artist Su Chisnell.*



*Les writes:*

I am writing to thank the members and committee of the Friends for the most attractive and, for me, nostalgic painting, with which I was presented, on standing down from the chairmanship of the

Friends Committee. It was with some sense of déjà vu that I received the painting. In April 1970, I left Norfolk for the Lakes and was presented with a painting entitled “Lullaby Moored for the Night”, a water colour, painted by Hannaford, owner of Broads Tours. This painting had hung, for sale, in my office, now Vikki's , of course. So, I now have two instant reminders of my times at Hunters Yard hung close enough together to take in, at the same time.

Perhaps whilst indulging myself in all this nostalgia, I should go right back to my first visit to Broadland with my school, in 1945. My housemaster and C/O of my Sea Cadet unit, Mr House organised the trip in two of C and G Press's boats, from Wroxham. For the next five years, I skippered a boat for the school, but never from Hunters. In 1959, however, whilst living in Charles Close, Wroxham, I received a letter from Mr and Mrs House to the effect that they were hiring on the Broads again. An arrangement was made for a meeting on Wroxham Broad followed by tea at Charles Close. During the day, I took them for a sail in my Yare and Bure and then an impromptu race around the NBYC buoys. I was able to beat their hire boat to windward but somewhat put out to find that their hire boat, *Luna* by name was faster downwind. That was my introduction to the Hunter fleet.



I shall, of course do all I can to promote the Heritage Fleet and the Friends and wish the committee and membership of the Friends all the good fortune in the world. When it comes to AGM's, Autumn events and the like, you will find me there because, like Mohammed Ali,\* I shall return\*, at least, as long as I am able. *Les*

*And Jean writes...*

I would like to thank the Friends for the delightful flowers to mark the end of my time on the committee. I very much enjoyed being part of the team who plan the format for the AGM and picnic and get to approve the distribution of money for the many extras which have made all the difference to the quality of the \*Hunters experience\* over the years.

My association with Hunters Yard goes back to the late 1960's when I was an instructor with the Norfolk Schools Sailing Association and we used the whole fleet on courses for adults and children at Easter and during the Summer holidays. I also have fond memories of many weeks of sailing with Thorpe St Andrews schools when *Lullaby/Teasel* was my usual boat. Once when sailing *Teasel* on the Ant with three thirteen year olds as crew, I was hailed by a passing boat - "Are you Mrs Barrable"?! Coincidentally, some thirteen years later we were to meet one of these boys when moored up at Lefkas Quay, in Greece. My very first sail on a Hunter boat was to move the fleet to Martham for a week's course. The children were using Martham School as a base. Cyril asked me who I was sailing with, as it was my first

time in a Hunter boat. I said Mr Gee.\*Oh you'll be alright with him \*. I did not know how prophetic that remark would turn out to be, some thirty years later.

As I step down from the committee, I would like to wish them and the Friends all the very best for the future. What they do is vital to keeping up the quality of the boats. I will not cease to keep up my interest in the yard and hope to watch the lovely ladies sailing for many years to come.

*Jean Gee*

*Fortunately Jennifer Mack is remaining as a member of the committee but has stepped down from being Membership Secretary.*

*Jennifer writes...*



### **Presentation at The Autumn Event in September**

At this year's Autumn event I was very fortunate to be presented by the Friends Committee with an excellent Natural History Book on Flora in recognition of my 18 years as Membership Secretary. I am

certain that it will give me inspiration in my quest to improve my Botanic Art skills now that I have a bit more spare time. It is something that I have always wanted to do. Because the 60 or so Friends were gathered together for the occasion I used the opportunity to address them directly. What I said applies to all of you and the following is a summary:

“The reason that I offered to take on the job of Membership Secretary was because I felt that it was a small way of being able to help the “family firm” and Trust. It would have been difficult way back in 1998 for me to have spent much time at the Yard because of family illness plus 4 acres of garden that needed constant attention!

During those 18 years the greatest impression that you, the Friends, have made on me has been your continuing enthusiasm, support and generosity.

As I have said before, it is still a most humbling experience for me as a family member that you have always responded in such a positive way over the years to help keep the standards and traditions of Hunters Yard alive. I find that truly remarkable and we couldn't have done it without you. In addition, you have also given me great personal support with your friendly, kind and often humorous messages and I thank you all most sincerely for all those things.”

*Jennifer Mack*

*At our last committee meeting, committee member Derek Herriott also handed in his resignation. Derek has been a member of the Friends committee since 2005 and his resignation was accepted with regret and thanks for his contribution.*

## Trustees

*Following on from all these major changes in the Friends committee, we recently learned that Bryan Read is to step down a Chair of the Norfolk Heritage Trustees.*

### Bryan Read's Retirement as Chairman of the Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust 1996 to 2016

*Jennifer Mack writes...*

Bryan's involvement with Hunters Yard goes way back to January 1995 when the Norfolk County Council's Education Committee decided to put the Norfolk County Sailing Base at Ludham up for sale.

The support from all those who knew the Yard and the Hunter Fleet was immediate and overwhelming. This was largely due to our local paper, the Eastern Daily Press, who ran a magnificent “Save Our Sailfleet” campaign. It very soon became obvious that a special person would be needed to help draw up a viable proposal to purchase the Yard. That person was Bryan Read!



*Paul Heiney with Bryan Read at the launch of the Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust (this picture appeared on the cover of Issue 1 of the Friends Newsletter).*

.Although Bryan had never visited Hunters Yard before he has been “part of the Broads” all his life and his experience at both the Great Yarmouth Port & Haven Commissioners and his involvement in the foundation of the Broads Authority made him the ideal candidate.

The tight timescale imposed by the Council meant that very swift action was needed and I cannot over emphasise how quickly everything had to happen. Bryan set up an initial Working Group and formed and chaired a Steering Group in March 1995 as well as making sure that the staff at the Yard could carry on with their normal and important work. Not only that, it was necessary to negotiate a way through the various stages of applying for a grant from the National Heritage Lottery Fund.

Finally, after terms were agreed with the Council, handover day arrived on 1 April 1996 and over 200 people gathered at the Yard including Paul Heiney, the TV broadcaster, to witness the Trust assume operational control of the Fleet. Unfortunately Bryan wasn't able to announce at the launch that the Heritage Lottery Fund would be awarding a magnificent grant of £200,000 until it went public on 10 April! As a result Bryan, together with the enthusiasm and dedication of the staff and the generous support from all those who knew the Yard, made it possible to retain the Fleet and enable this part of the history of the Broads to be preserved it was a truly gigantic effort by Bryan.

Other notable events during the course of

Bryan's Chairmanship and guidance included:

**The idea of building a “Millennium” Boat, its creation and completion. *Lucent*, as she was named, was fittingly launched at the same time as the celebration of the first 10 years of the Trust.**

***Rebel Reveller* was acquired and upheld the aims of the Trust to save and restore Broads heritage boats as well as to maintain boat building skills.**

**The Yard's 70th Anniversary was celebrated in 2001 and the 80th in 2010.**

**The loyalty of our staff is legendary and the celebration of Tom Grapes 60th anniversary of working at the Yard in 2007 is a magnificent example!**

One of Bryan's greatest and more recent achievements over the past 10 years has been the development of the new moorings basin. The plan was firmed up in 2009 but there were many obstacles to overcome along the way including conforming to planning and EU regulations as well as adverse weather conditions. However the Basin, appropriately named The Read Dyke.



The Read Dyke, was finally opened in 2013. It was an immediate success and, amazingly, it looks as though it has always

always been there and it is a fitting tribute to Bryan's efforts!

In spite of the extremely difficult economic conditions over the past years Bryan has navigated us safely through those rough waters during his Chairmanship with his continuing forward thinking and enthusiasm about taking new challenges on board.

I am certain that you will join me in offering our profuse thanks to Bryan for all these remarkable achievements.

With our best wishes to both Bryan and Sheila.

*Jennifer Mack*

*There will be a presentation to Bryan by the Friends committee at the laying up supper in November.*

## **NEW APPOINTMENTS**

A new Trustee has been appointed recently- Alastair Drew and there has been an addition to the Yard staff, Kathy Simms will be working on marketing. There will be more about the new appointees in the next issue of the newsletter.

## **Junior Hunters**

“Just come back from a wet walk to Horsey beach. The walk there was fine but as soon as we started walking back it became wet and windy!(it happens every year). As we struggled along skipper Dad decided to go to the Nelson's Head for lunch. It was lovely but filling....”*at this point in Emily Bodenham's 2015 log there is an illustration of a jacket potato and a cup of something hot.*

I and my fellow reviewers are eagerly looking forward to reading the 2016 junior log book entries. I hope many of the young sailors sketched and wrote in the log books this summer and found the experience rewarding and enjoyable. Emily, last year's winner wrote that she had lots of fun writing about her adventures on the broads and I hope many of you did, too.

## **Friends Write...**

*From Peter S Thring, Felsted,*

Dear Christine Wall,

The sight of Issue 53(March 2015) sent to me by a cruising friend for whom I used to crew, has reminded me that it is exactly seventy one years almost to the day that I first stepped aboard a sailing boat. The place was Womack Water and the boat was a *Hustler*. That was the start of over sixty years of enjoyable sailing experiences in various boats and on different waters but the Norfolk broads and the Hunter yachts have always held a firm place in my affectionate memories.

1945 was a memorable year. We had our first proper family holiday; holidays had been impossible during the war and my sister and I were too young before the war to enjoy such pleasures. Even the journey from our Buckinghamshire home to Norfolk was an unaccustomed excursion. It took most of the day; few, if any, of the roads were dual carriageway and by-passes were non-existent, so we wound our way through places like Watford, Stevenage, Royston, Newmarket and Thetford. It was a slow journey and our Ford Anglia was over-laden with stores for a fortnight; many

foods were rationed and we were not registered with the local Norfolk shops, so much of our food had to be brought from home. Eventually we reached Ludham and were welcomed by Percy hunter and his sons. My father had been introduced to the Broads by his father shortly after WW1 and had, I believe, met Percy Hunter in the 1930s.

I had been an avid reader of Arthur Ransome and almost felt that I already knew the Broads. My expectations were high and I was not disappointed. Holidaying on the Broads in 1945 differed a little from today's experience. I think that it felt more of an adventure. There were many fewer boats afloat and, with fuel rationed, hardly any motor boats. Shopping was a problem with many foods rationed and not available to unregistered visitors. In any case any village shops were often quite a distance from the waterways and not well stocked, but since we had brought most of our supplies from home, shopping was seldom necessary. We tended to seek overnight moorings as far from villages and other people as possible. Fresh food was often obtained by walking to a farm to buy milk and eggs.

In the next six years we had more holidays either as a family or, later, with school friends, and explored all of the navigable northern broads as well as the rivers Yare, as far as Surlingham, and Waveney, up to the entrance to Oulton Broad. I recall the feeling of nervousness as we navigated Breydon Water on a falling tide, fearful of being stranded on the mud. The swing bridges at Yarmouth and Reedham and

the Lifting bridges on the New Cut, could also be alarming; the bridge's wind shadow would cause one's boat to slow to a crawl as it passed under the bridge, so that one was fearful that the bridge would close while one was stationary in the middle of it. I recall making more than one attempt to have enough way to shoot Reedham bridge against current and wind.

Those early sailing holidays, followed, initially, by a few years of racing dinghy experience, led, after a pause to get married, start a family and a career, to opportunities to cruise with family or friends along much of England's east and south east coasts, off Scotland's west coast, across the channel and the North sea, along the coast of western Denmark and southern Sweden, and in the Mediterranean sea from the south of France, Corsica and Sardinia to Italy and the Adriatic and to Greece and Turkey. I little realize in 1945 that a holiday on Percy Hunter's beautiful little yachts, together with the support of my father and many others, would open the door to sixty years of pleasure, and occasional fear, while messing about in boats.

As a tangible expression of gratitude for those sixty plus years, I am enclosing a modest donation to the Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust and I ask you to be so kind as to pass it to the appropriate recipient. (*It has been done!-Ed.*)

I wish you and all who are involved with the Hunter fleet all success in providing others with wonderful sailing experiences in the years to come.

Yours sincerely,

*Peter Thring.*

## 1950-”The way of the Wood Violet” or Three men in a Boat Not to mention the dinghy

Being an impression rather than an exact log, by one of impressionable years, thank goodness.

*Here is a further extract from this remarkable log from more than 65 years ago!*

**SUNDAY 25th June(continued)**

.....J (*Jack Webster*)& R(*Ronald Ingle*)bathed from the boat, and since it did turn out a very fine day took their shirts off, which stayed off till tea time, when, not for want of sun, but for excess, they were put on again.

We passed through the bridge over the River Ant in fine style; the remaining passage up to the Broad however was breathless and slow (“Those in the back cried forward and those in the front cried back” i.e. there was some division of opinion as to the value of trying to sail. In the end, we are happy to say, we compromised). The peaceful passage has allowed J to proceed with his reading. We begin to detect signs of his ancestry, in those hitherto sapient features. After tea J & R embarked once again on a trip upon which Izaak Walton [16th Century author of *The Complete Angler*] would surely have smiled kindly. We landed on Pleasure Island (renamed Swan Island for tell tale feathers indicated its true owners). For the next hour or more J read and completed his Plato, while R sketched from the dinghy off shore. We returned, most contentedly realising the lovely evening as the setting sun shone over the quiet expanse of Barton and made the creek opposite the island

look so inviting that we quanted the boat up to it. Apart from midges the evening was delightful. Howard Spring is a real benefactor of the voyage, and we are quite caught up in the events of the novel Ted Pentecost and the rest are virtually stowed away in the lockers, to be let out at meal times. So, “*Goodnight Hell Fodder, see you at the dividing of the sheep from the goats!*”

**MONDAY 26th**

A slight rumour of rebellion can be heard these mornings as (*Daddy*) rouses us, generally about 7.15 am. Nevertheless in response to his “show a leg” four lithe legs of deepening hue do appear. When R returned from a bathe in the Broad he stepped on board without making fast the dinghy a few minutes later D saw it drifting astern. Thanks to the early hour, I suppose, this was taken extraordinarily quietly. We began, rather earlier than usual, by sailing to Neatis Head & thence up to Stalham. The botanical flavour was stronger today than usual (than ever!?) and highlights included Water Hemlock, the ? Cyprus-like Sedge, Water Potentilla, & Great Spearwort. We lunched by Sutton Staithe, then sailed to Wayford Bridge. At each of the places visited today we collected something in the way of grub. It has been proposed that a Silver Tankard be awarded to the committer of the Blackest of Black Marks of the trip. It is not always easy to allocate responsibility (in which event of course “the Owner” has it). On the other hand the blessing of clottish distinction and proud ownership of the pot is mixed. Could D’s insinuous attempt to pass to windward another boat, claim? Then R let slip a knife

Overboard before supper. After a good day's sailing we tied up in the Barton creek once more. J & R sailed about the Broad in the dinghy, among other songs practicing the Barley Mow, and visited Swan Island again. I was wrong in saying Jack had finished Plato yesterday. As I have always felt, he (Plato) is probably endless. Jack has coined a new name for the parts we don't speak about (other than on the Broads): There it is. Have you heard the story of when J sat on the jam? "There, there". Another applicable term arose from a character in our reading, applied by whom? By D of course. Nethersole. Boundless is the scope and imagery of our language indeed. The scribe apologises for the flights and irrelevancies of his account not so much because it's all irrelevant, but because its unloglike. But then, like a lot of other proverbial sayings and adages that have recently been debunked: "Rolling off a log is not easy".

## **TUESDAY 27th**

*"....Nothing was more important to them than to make*

*a stylish and efficient getaway which would leave no grins at the antics of landlubbers on the faces of the curious lining the quay." Howard Spring*

R was the last to rise this morning; the sight of Jack's face up to the ears in shaving froth was a touching sight, first thing. They bathed together in the Broad. A stout breakfast as usual. Departure too readily delayed by a few drops of rain, time of course made good by reading aloud. There followed a stimulating morning's sailing on the Broad, in which we competed for the lap record on the triangular course. A fresh breeze made it a rapid, straight forward sail.

J won from R by 15 secs in a time of 16" 30'. Despite a longish pause for lunch we were at the Ant Bridge by 2.30. We sailed on to Ranworth & circled Malthouse Broad and returned to lie bows into a creek off the dyke, already known to us. After tea we indulged in a more serious discussion than has been usual on the basis and popularity of Right and Wrong, originating in our quite frequent criticisms of There is No Armour. I am afraid that it is almost routine now for J & R to go off on an evening trip while D stays behind to peel spuds and make the boat 'tiddly'. He swears that he enjoys it, and frankly we believe him. We left the dinghy at the staithe and walked up to the church where J read in the lee of a buttress and R sketched, perched on a grave never very certain whether artistic licence can include this practice. Strawberries for supper. We emerged thereafter (this is not intended to imply head first - tho' that is true) to find one of our nearest approaches to a good sunset. On a pretext of seeing it the better, R climbed the mast. D's comments on the danger involved in descent cannot be recorded in this journal. We enjoyed the evening's read and coffee (albeit of a new brand, instead of the old faithful Camp). It was shared with our uninvited guests the midges.

## **WEDNESDAY 28th**

*... "sitting, standing and crouching in the cockpit, we were all revolving our jaws and grunting with satisfaction."*

Formal concession was made to our reluctance to rise as a man with Daddy (or is it just R's reluctance?) when D said he would count on us getting up when he should see us do so. I fear he thinks there

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are signs of degeneracy in his crew. The net affect of this was that R escaped the early chores.

We sailed up to Horning and back into South Walsham Broad with the wind freshening considerably. We circled the inner Broad, then dropped weight beside the staithe. A visit to the shop was fruitless on account of early closing day. We found a cheerful little boy of four at the staithe, who turned out to be deaf. He was chortling at the boats. At about 3.30 we tied up in the dyke; J & R bathed along with a squash ball and much heartiness. By now the sun had

well established itself so that we had tea and were read to in bathing trunks. On returning from a browse over sketch & a latin couplet (vide infra) we found that D had been indulging in throwing things O.B [overboard]. First sign was an empty Tom Long tobacco tin which we found floating about 80 yds off. On arriving at the boat D announced that the bucket was O.B. After agreeing in council that this was undoubtedly the day's Black Mark, Jack went in to collect it.

*Ronald Ingle.....to be continued*

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