

HUNTER'S YARD



Newsletter of the Friends of the Hunter Fleet



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Friends of the Hunter Fleet Committee Members

Chairman

Rodney Longhurst

129 Christchurch Road
Norwich NR2 3PQ
Tel: 01603 453889

Vice Chairman/Event Organiser

Neil Hopkinson
Tel: 01455 203167

Committee Secretary/NHFT Trustee

Philip Bray
5 Westfield Road
Swaffham, Norfolk PE37 7HE
E: philip.bray@huntersyard.com
Tel: 01760 725931

Membership Secretary

Louise Hopkinson
8 Spenser Road
Lutterworth LE17 7HE
E: louise.hopkinson@huntersyard.co.uk
Tel: 01455 203167

Treasurer

Peter Wall
Flycatcher, School Road
Ludham NR29 5PF
E: thewalls@broadland.net
Tel: 01692 678060

Chairman-NHFT-Bruce Elson

E:teandbe@btinternet.com
Tel: 01692 360206

NHFT Yard Manager

Vikki Walker
E: vikki@huntersyard.com
Tel: 01692 678263

NHFT Nominated Trustee

Jennifer Mack
Tel: 01692 403508

Pio Altarelli
Tel: 01986 895559

Linda Aspland
Tel: 01603 951814

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Editorial

Welcome to Issue 61 of the Friends Newsletter. I'm sure you will agree with me that the photo on the cover is a lovely evocative picture of sailing on the Broads and even reproduction in sepia does not distract from its beauty (more of that and the changes afoot on p.4). But back to the photo; it was the overall winner in the 2017 Friends Photo competition and was taken by one of youngest entrants Missy Trethewy. There is to be another Photo competition next year and I believe that some of the 2017 winning entries will feature in the 2019 Hunter Fleet Calendar.

The young are also featured on p.6 where we have the prize winning log from James who sailed last summer with his father. It is always good to feature the younger Friends and their contributions are always most welcome.

Apart from the younger members, this edition also features Hunter Friends who have been sailing further afield and conversely the 2016 log books give impressions of sailors from other areas who are new to the Broads.

As always, I have had no difficulty filling this edition with your contributions and have further contributions awaiting publication- a very happy situation and one which many newsletter editors would envy, so please keep them coming and if you were not included this time you definitely will be quite soon.

Christine

Newsletter editor:

Christine Wall
Flycatcher
School Road
Ludham NR29 5PF
Tel:01692 678060

The Chair Rambles....

The end of another sailing year marked as usual by the Autumn Event which was very well attended, and, in my opinion, very successful, due to the organisational efforts of my colleagues on the committee, Friends volunteers and the boatyard staff. The weather is always important on these occasions, the morning was overcast and chill with very light winds, but, in the afternoon, the sun came out, the wind increased, most enjoyable.

As Chairman of the Friends Committee I would like to say **thank you very much** to all who gave their time and effort to this event.

To me the title of this item in the magazine implies that the writer has certain latitude when choosing their subject, however, it should always be relevant in some way to sailing on the Broads in general, and to sailing on the Hunter boats in particular.

The experimental installation of electric power in *Lucent*, the necessity for which, I think, is well understood by all members, is on hold for the moment purely on financial grounds, however, the question of outboard or inboard motor continues to cause discussion in some quarters.

As has been explained on several occasions the **Trustees have gone to great lengths to establish the most suitable form of unit to use** and there is no doubt that an inboard motor, although considerably more expensive and complicated to install than an outboard, is the way to go. Mention has been made of former times when boatyards offered auxiliary power to the smaller hire yachts as an optional extra. This usually

consisted of a 2 stroke Seagull Silver Century hanging on the back of the boat which, as I can confirm from my own experience, was prone to being caught by the mainsheet at almost any time, but particularly during a gybe, planned or otherwise, where the sheet did it best to rip the motor off the bracket, and, if you were very unlucky, could shorten the mainsheet unexpectedly and drive you across the river out of control. It was hell to fill the fuel tank, particularly when underway, and, due to the inherent design of the gearbox, left an oily trail in its wake which could have been followed by a blind pug dog with a heavy cold all the way from Horsey Staithe to Ludham Bridge.

I fully appreciate **that modern 4 stroke outboards are infinitely superior in every way** but they are still going to get caught on/by something, and they do not take kindly to being beaten by a passing mainsheet, or submerged in Broads water.

The alternative of offering an outboard attached to a dinghy was also considered.

As a matter of curiosity our secretary, Philip Bray, who does use a modern outboard attached to his dinghy to move his own yacht, decide to write a set of suitable instructions to be include in the boats welcome pack, for hirers who decided to take the auxiliary option should it have been on offer. He came to the conclusion that, since these instructions, based on his own considerable experience, could not be guaranteed for himself, it was a disaster waiting to happen for hirers with no previous experience of such matters.

At this point I realise that my ramble has

perhaps yet again turned into something akin to a rant, however I must emphasise that electric outboards are not on the menu for this trial.

On a lighter note: **Times have changed.**

Eating out in pubs during a sailing holiday on the broads seems to have become something of the norm these days. Many of us can remember when pubs were principally places where, apart from drinking to drown your sorrows of the day, you could dry out, warm up, use the toilets in comfort (does anyone else remember the perennially overflowing Elsans at Horsey Staithe?) and very, very occasionally have a shower during the week. Food was not an option. Cooking on board consisted of opening tins, peeling spuds, and frying everything else. For me the smell of eggs and bacon frying is synonymous with broads holidays.

Given that it was usually any female who had agreed to join the crew who got lumbered with the cooking, it is not surprising that, in this day and age, things have changed, and for the better.

However, I wondered if there are any stalwart diehard sailors out there who continue to cook at the end of a hard days sailing and that, given the massive upsurge in cookery programmes on the telly, and available ingredients to cook with, it has in anyway changed what they prepare these days, and who does it?

Another thought: there are numerous sailing magazine advertising some very nice sailing boats for home construction using (sometimes pre-cut) plywood and epoxy glue construction but none that I

know of specifically for use on the broads which, as we all know, has some very local special requirements. Has anybody seen such a design, preferably with a nice sheerline, but without a bowsprit. I am of course talking of a modern equivalent to the Hunter boats.

NB There is absolutely no chance that I shall ever take on such a project but somebody might be interested.

Very best wishes to all our members.

Rodney Longhurst.

CHANGES TO THE NEWSLETTER

The format and style of our newsletter is quite unique and the newsletter has been produced in sepia since the earliest editions.

The Friends committee has discussed the newsletter at some length at recent meetings and have decided that it is time for a change, particularly since FoHF have just celebrated their 21st birthday.

It has been decided that since photos are now of such high quality they would benefit from being in colour and since some Friends are finding the sepia print difficult to read, the print will revert to black.

Therefore, in future, the Friends newsletter will be produced with black print and colour pictures. It was also thought that a creamy paper may add to the quality and make the print and picture more vibrant. The title block will also be brought up to date.

These changes will all be made when the new fleet logo is available.

Membership News

This has always been my favourite time of the year. I wait with eager anticipation for the winter months when we are able to walk around the shed full of Percy's Lovely Ladies. The simple joy of watching the skills of Ian, John & Phil as they lovingly restore each boat ready for next year's launch.

Autumn Picnic

I had been watching the predicted weather closely. Incredible storms were hitting the Americas and temperatures were dropping. Fingers were firmly crossed, hoping that we would have a bright sunny day and a good wind for this Friends' Event. Gosh we were so lucky! As dawn broke and an early mist cleared, we were indeed blessed with the most wonderful September sunshine.

During the day most of the 85 members either sailed or spent a delightful couple of hours following Percy's Ladies in the Nancy Oldfield's motor launch.

A great deal of enthused chatter preceded the arrival of Jeremy Hall's (EN) group on their return from the very popular wildlife walk on Horsefen.



Lunchtime Autumn Event

Photo Competition

This has proved to be very popular this year. Thank you all for sending in your entries. We had over 80 photos submitted. I would like to thank the judges, Philip Bray, John Franks, Pam Taylor & Linda Aspland for their excellent choices.

The overall winner was **Missy Trethewy**, one of our youngest Members, who took a beautiful picture with her Dad's phone!

(See Missy's picture reproduced on the front cover of this newsletter).

A full list of winning photos can be found at <http://www.huntersyard.co.uk/learn-sailing/friends/photo-competition/>

We will be launching the 2018 Competition in April.

I am sure you will be delighted to hear that we now have over 910 members of the Friends. As many of you are aware, I have been looking at ways to simplify the renewal process of the Friends of the Hunter Fleet Membership. So far I have had a great response, thank you. I would be extremely grateful if everyone would kindly consider changing their renewal date to **1st January 2018**.

May I take this opportunity to thank you all for your greatly appreciated support of the Friends of the Hunter Fleet. A personal thank you to Rosie Gibb who edits all Neil's and my written contributions to the Friends.

May I also take this opportunity to you all a very Happy Christmas.

Louise Hopkinson

Junior Hunters

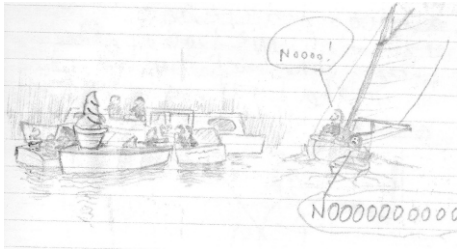
2016 Log Book Winning Entry

For the Buckley Boys, Dad Dominic and son James this was the start of their third “boys trip” courtesy of Hunters Yard.

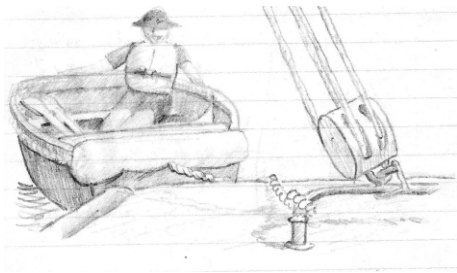
JAMES' LOG

Day 1

Hello, I am James and I like Pizza and sailing. I'm ready to sail.



When we got to benits abby (sic) I got into the dinghy, it was sun.



His First Command

When we got to ranworth I had a huge ice cream. At tea time we had a pizza (one each) and ate on the boat and watched the sun go down.

Day 2

SNORE SNORE SNORE. He is snoring”Wake up” 2 hours later we sailed in *James' log is continued on page 7.....*

DOMINIC'S LOG

.Day 1....The wind remained steady from the SW and *Hustler 4* surged forward against a foul tide reaching St Benet's Abbey only an hour after leaving the Yard. Here we had the first disappointment of the trip when we came across the famous “Ice Cream Boat” only to find it surrounded by a queue of motorboats ; heaving to and waiting was out of the question so we had to continue ice cream-less.

Once passed St Benet's we came into more sheltered areas, with wind shadow in the lea of the denser trees. The crew took the opportunity to “jump ship” and take command of his own vessel. Content initially to take a free ride and be towed along, he decided later to start rowing pushing *Hustler* along in the less windy parts.

....At Ranworth, the first priority was to make up for the disappointment of two hours earlier and get a large ice cream. The lure of the Pizza den at the Malsters was too great for the crew to resist. Finding the pizza presented in take away boxes the decision was taken to return to *Hustler 4* moored 200yards off the motor boat packed staithe and eat our pizza in the cockpit watching to sun go down...an evening of star gazing ensued. After a quick chapter of Harry Potter it was “lights out” on our first day. **Spoiler Alert:** Hermione was Dobby in disguise all the time!!!

Day 2

Decided to stay put and have a real Swallows and Amazons day. James and I explored using the dinghy. James was really getting the hang of rowing, but was less certain with sailing.

A visit to the staithe and climb to the top of Ranworth church tower-beautiful view on clear cloudless day before treating ourselves to an ice cream! More rowing and sailing in the dykes and disused broads-some had actually become so overgrown that they had effectively ceased to exist : it would be interesting to compare the OS map with current satellite imaging, though our “ground truthing” suggested some updating is

James' log (continued)

The dinghy to the staithe. Then we went for a walk and climbed the tower at ranworth church. then we had an ice cream. after that we had a sail on the dinghy. at half past 11 we had lunch. Then we had ice cream and an explore and found out that the map needs to be updated. At 5 o' clock we had pizza and another ice cream (too many ice creams).

Day 3

I woke up early and rowed ashore and had an ice cream then rowed back for breakfast then we set sail for ludham. When we got there I had an ice cream. At 6 o'clock we had a pizza(12 inch) at the pub and then had an ice cream with sprinkles marshmallow and a HUGE flake, huge happy face

Summary

	Yes	No
Boat	/	
Pizza	/	
Ice cream	/	
Sailing	/	
Rowing	/	
No washing	/	
Star gazing	/	
Birdwatching	/	
Exploring	/	
Reading	/	
Being towed in dinghy	/	
Daddy	/	
Daddy snoring	/	

.....And Dad's final comments..."we have had a brilliant 3 days. James loved rowing and exploring in the dinghy and we have both felt refreshed from the lack of electronic devices which fill our lives.

Thank you so much-we shall return."

Dominic's log (Continued)

Required! After tea(another pizza for James!)we rowed back to *Hustler* for some wildlife watching and later,,star gazing. One interesting sight was a small moth that fell into the water about 20 feet away, then propelled itself, making a wake like an outboard motor, until eventually it reached *Hustler*, where it hauled itself out on the topsides to dry out.

Another chapter of Harry Potter and then to bed. **Spoiler Alert:** Harry cheated at Quiddich by using a fishing rod to catch the Switch!!

Day 3

Up with the sun, and another row ashore, this time to replemish water supplies(and another ice cream),before setting off for Ludham.

It was quite breezy on Ranworth Broad so considered putting in a reef. However, this died away very quickly once we were in the reach to the main river so was glad we did not.

The breeze was quite fitful but once in clearer air east of Benet's Abbey, we made better progress, sharing the helming on an easy reach/run. Thereafter it was an uneventful sail until reaching the Thurne, when a huge gust, probably F 5-6 from directly astern(SW)had us barrelling along, severely over-canvassed. Just as we were about to round up,and heave to, the wind swung round 180 degrees and dropped back down to about 10 knots-the sea breeze(for which we had waited in vain on Tuesday)had cut in....once moored at public moorings...the dinghy was used for further exploring to the top of the staithe (in pursuit of the perfect ice cream). Tea at the Kings Arms(pizza and ice cream of course)...it was already getting dark as we left (8pm)so time for another wonder at the star filled sky and final two chapter of Harry Potter before bed.

Major Spoiler Alert: Voldemort: join me and together we can rule the galaxy

Harry: I'll never join you. You killed my father
Voldemort: No, Harry I AM YOUR FATHER.



From the Yard

Vikki Walker Yard Manager

Pictures by Vikki Walker

Hello and welcome to what is now the closing of our sailing season. The dyke is full of 'naked ladies'! It's a sad time in a way, as it means the girls won't be out 'earning their living' for a while. But it's also nice because they can have their 'beauty treatments' and get pampered. For the lads though, it signals even harder work for the next 6 months.

So what's been going on here? Well, the season wasn't the greatest but all in all wasn't too bad either. The bookings were down by 4% on the cabin yachts but up by 2% on the half-deckers, with more short breaks than full weeks. This does mean more work but at the same time brings in a little extra income, so we think it's worth it.



As you can imagine, this also means things are looking rather different in the sheds too. Mattresses, drawers bedding, sails, cookers, crockery and all the rest are getting ready to be cleaned and put away or made ready for working on.



Plus it means we get to enjoy even more visitors

Our lovely volunteer skippers have taken out 79 two-hour sails for us. They've also had 13 starter sails, which are normally longer than 4 hours and 10 help a hirer sails, which are usually only up to 2 hours. We really couldn't do any of those without the help of all of you lovely people.

AirBnB has gone better than first thought. We've raised £3,817.00 by having 62 bookings, 95 nights in total, 3 dinghy hires and 6 two-hour skippered sails. One guest

has become a half-decker and cabin yacht hirer and has also become a Friend! I must just say though, it has been such a lot of extra work for the lads, having to do so many extra 'turn arounds'. Sometimes the late arrivals have been an issue to cover as indeed all the extra paperwork. We've had some great reviews, most saying how wonderful our place is and how much they enjoyed their experience. After all that was one of the main aims, along with getting the girls used in one-way or another. Most want to come back again and a couple of them would like to take a 'learn to sail holiday' next year. So in all in all, I'd say it was worth doing this year.

There have been a couple of staff changes recently. Sadly for us, Marc has decided to go self employed doing general maintenance work for people. Which means we're now in the process of interviewing for his replacement ready for the winter 'beauty treatments' for the girls. We'll let you know who's joined us soon.

There is also a change in the office. Some of you may well have spoken to Anita and Helen while they've been in the office helping me. Well, we've decided to take Helen on full time, to concentrate mainly on the marketing but also to help in the office. So when you're making your bookings or have enquiries you'll get either of us. On the marketing side, if you follow us on Twitter and Facebook you'll have already seen some of her work. But -did you know, we're also on Instagram, Flickr and we have our own *you tube* channel for our instructional video clips. We should finally be able to start doing our little video

clips of helpful hints next year amongst other things, so keep checking our social media.

A couple of the 'old gals' did end up having an incident or two this year. Poor *Buff Tip* needed a patch to keep her going. But as if to get her own back, she hit a private boat in a second incident. Unfortunately the private boat came off the worse, bless her. I think that was because Mr P (aka Peaky Philip Peake, boat builder) has made her bowsprit like a battling ram! Our little girl will still need a bit of extra TLC this winter to put her completely right after that though.

By the way, Mr P has yet another name, its Keith! One of our volunteer skippers keeps calling him that. I'm not sure, but I think it's because of a certain incident that happened one day. Mr P was meant to help him out when he got becalmed on the main river and nearly home, but other things happened instead. See what you think....

You see, this skipper was not far from the mouth of the Womack turning. He just couldn't quite make it in to end the 2-hour sail, so he radioed for a gentle nudge. Mr P donned all the gear, life jacket etc, hopped in the dory and set out to give him that little nudge home. Well, at least that's what he was meant to do; however, Mr P seemed to have other ideas. He raced out to find the boat and skipper, but while looking for them he passed one of our other boats. The people on board were waving to him and the skippered shouted 'hello Keith' (or words to that effect). So Mr P, being the lovely chap he is, waved back saying "hello" but just kept on motoring past them. You

see in Mr P's mind, he was looking for people that needed help not someone waving nicely to him so he didn't think it was them!

Now, the skipper did get a little help from some one else and made it back into the Yard, actually before Mr P did. I wonder why that was I can hear you thinking. Well, when Mr P did arrive back he just happily said he couldn't find them so they must've managed to sort themselves out. To that the skipper, who was getting his sailing gear off, shouted out. "No, you just didn't stop for us but you did at least wave". Or something similar to that, as you can imagine, well.....we just all fell about the place laughing! So now we all regularly rib Mr P, sorry KEITH about his new name and how he got it.

Just quickly, I'd like to say, excitedly, that we are nearly there on the fund raising for the electric pod for *Lucent*. We need just another £700 to hit the target of £8,000. The Trustees received £5,000 from the Norman Foundation, £1,000 from Love the Broads and a further £1,300 from various hirers this year. Just a little bit more and it will be a 'goer' woohoo -I can't wait!

Lastly, I'd like to give a big thank you and shout out to all of our volunteers who without your help we just couldn't run our season as well. In no particular order, thank you to, Richard, Peter, Christine, Philip, Pat, Ian, Jem, Andy, Martin, Malcolm, Joy, Neil, Louise, Jimmy, Sally, Mick, Neville, Mike, Steve, James, Joe, Rodney and Rob.

We also say a big thank you to each and every one of you, our customers, Friends of

the Trust and visitors to the Yard. The words thank you just don't feel enough because we really wouldn't be here if not for ALL of you.....THANK YOU SO MUCH!
Vikki Walker

Friends News and Events

Sadly we lost Derek Herriott, one of our committee members in the summer.



Derek had been a member of the Friends Committee since 2005. We are delighted that Diana is continuing to attend Friend's events.

Friends Events

Two Day Skippered Sails 10th to 15th June 2018. £220 per person

THIS EVENT IS FULL: But we have decided to run another week of sails **1st-7th July 2017** Contact Neil on 07930910870 or neil@huntersyard.co.uk

Programme: The River Ant: the narrowness of The Ant enables you to hone your tacking skills and use every breath of wind to keep way on. The Broads Authority

and Broadsword has cleared some of the trees so we can get more of that elusive wind into the sail. Barton Broad and the reaches to Sutton Broad are the prizes for our endeavours, with the shallows of Irstead Shoals the last challenge. You will be staying at the Regency Guest House in Neatishead and eat at the White Horse, which is but a stone's throw away.

On our way up we shall visit How Hill and Toad Cottage. You will see wildlife in abundance, kingfishers, otters and marsh harriers to name but a few. If you are very lucky, you may see a bittern flying.

AGM Saturday 12th May 2018

This event is an indicator that spring has arrived with 'Percy's Ladies' lying resplendent in the dyke fresh from a winter of maintenance. As last year we will have Pam Taylor from The Dragonfly Society taking a wildlife walk in and around Horsefen during the afternoon.

After the AGM the barbecue will be ready and waiting before an afternoon of skippered sails. There will also be the opportunity to sample the delights of the fabulous FoHF cake table.

Half Decker Treasure Hunt July 14th and 15th 2018 £tbc

This event has been in the planning for a year or so and now it is up and running. We will be using *Buff Tip*, *Sundew* and *Brown Bess* for three families to enjoy a Treasure Hunt in and around the rivers and Broads, based on Arthur Ransoms' Coot Club. You can if you want, have a skipper who will, as on the two day skippered sails guide and only take the helm if necessary. Where you will be going is a secret as you will need to

find clues to first of all find your boat and then work your way from clue to clue to the campsite (full facilities). We will have a barbecue so you will need to provide your food for Lunch (two days), Dinner and Breakfast.

The price is based on two adults and two children. We can have families of two adults and three children (an extra camping fee would apply) on the boats.

If you would like to reserve a place then contact Neil on 07930910870 or neil@huntersyard.co.uk. We already have one provisional booking so two more family places are still available.

LOG BOOKS 2016

As usual the log books provide a wonderful and different selection of entries. There was song as that by the Wilkins family who sailed in *Luna* in August and had “ a fantastic weeks sailing with sun and wind” The song is sung to the tune of”Twelve days of Christmas”....

*On the first day of sailing the skipper said to me
"The ronds are stuck in the tree"*

On the second day... Two oars are missing and the ronds....

On the third day of sailing.....

Three yachts a tacking, two oars are missing, the ronds

On the fourth day of sailing

Four seals are swimming, three yachts.....

*On the fifth day of sailing RICE OVERBOARD,
four seals...three...*

On the sixth day of sailing

Six boats are quanting, rice overboard, four....

On the seventh day of sailing..

Seven swans are sinking, six boats...rice...

They say" Please enjoy singing; our boys did!!!

Skipper Mike who sailed with First mate Isabelle, Very able seaman Theresa, Ship's economist Liz in *Luna* in July commented" the sailors realized how many nautical terms they already know. They sail close to the wind with the wind in their sails. Making headway and giving mosquitoes awide berth. We are no stick in the muds but have had to do a lot of quantative easing and we all are familiar with quanting mechanics. We had a safe hand on the tiller and were on an even keel with a fair wind" Two sailors new to Hunters, Chris Gunstone and Morag Cook wrote a very nice detailed account of their week on the Broads together with a poem.

*An odd couple from Burton came sailing
In wet windless June, 'twas even hailing!
But the week went fast
We like a life afore the mast
We'll book again with the next Hunter's mailing!*

*"Come sailing to the Broads" said Chris
"It's too sunny and dry to miss!"
Even in a wet windless June
A week passed too soon
But we did miss real toilets for a piss!*

Ben who sailed with Charlie in *Hustler 4* in August added a postscript to their entry.... "I have had a wonderful week not knowing what time we got up or went to bed. Only eating when we felt it was necessary. The effect of not having to do things at certain times has made life this week appear less robotic and monotonous. I feel thoroughly rested and rejuvenated. For this I cannot thank you enough!" Mike & Christine Gibson who sailed in

Hustler in September concluded their log "an excellent and enjoyable 6 days aboard *Hustler 1*. A splendidly designed and maintained craft which has borne its 80 years quite remarkably- a tribute to those who strive to maintain the fleet-long may they continue to enable others to benefit from the experience. Although both of us sail regularly in quite different boats, we have honed our skills and developed others to overcome different requirements of Broads sailing. There was much interest and appreciation shown by many other Broads users. Thanks for the experience". This year we had sailors returning after 30 years and a very nicely written "trip down memory lane" from *Luna's* log 8-10 July. This was an account of a 70th birthday trip for Geoff who grew up in a non boating family and first sailed on the Broads with the scouts in 1960. Geoff cajoled grown up daughters and son-in law to sign up for this cruise down memory lane.

Other sailors new to Hunters were Wayne Eagle and Janna Robertson who commented "Fantastic boats, so fit for purpose, everyone very friendly and helpful. Fantastic three days; learnt more in 3 days on the Broads than years on the Solent! Got up close with lots of birds and too many reed clad banks, were better sailors for it and will defo be back."

It was good to see a log from Kate Andrews, a prize winner from last year, sailing with Tom & Richard Biggs, and that last year's awful weather had not put them off.

Hustler 4 log book had several entries from new sailors on the Broads. Edward and

Kathy May in their quite lyrical account/entry say it was “first ever voyage in a Hustler; first ever voyage on the Broads”. Nick and Jenny Hart from Cornwall commented “*Hustler 4* opened the door to a wonderful week on the Broads”.

The final thought must go to a comment in *Hustler 2* log book ”highlight had to be awning that was totally dry wonderful!”

Friends trip to Holland,2017

Many happy memories from this year’s trip. Our journey to Harlingen on a very warm day was very well organised by Willy and the Dutch railways. Harlingen was a charming little town with an interesting port.

The Hunter motley crew were introduced to the Captain of the *Ideal*, Ari and his mate Kirian, not forgetting the very well behaved dog, who soon gained our affections. Kirian soon organised us...”ladies and gentlemen, I need 3 on the main sail and 2 on the mizzen” and we jumped to it!



We enjoyed long sailing days in good winds. Everyone was prepared to do anything from peeling vegetables to

washing up, and the atmosphere was of calm sociability.

Some of the highlights were settling aground in the Waddensee, watching the sunset, swimming and walking on the sand.



Our Captain’s amazing sailing circuit of the Tall ships as they lined up with their flags flying, and particularly the Brazillian boat with their sailors perched on every yard arm, like birds.

Last and certainly not least was Willy’s great catering. Plentiful food and drink, unusual recipes and much tea and cake, which kept everyone happy. A truly memorable trip.

June and Jack Gentle

*Willy writes: it was quite a memorable trip! Cruising amongst the square riggers, grounding in a thunderstorm, walking on water were just some of the 2017 highlights. *Ideal* has been reserved for 2018, see booking form with this newsletter.*

Another Way of Sailing

Sometimes it seems almost disloyal to think about sailing anywhere else but on the Broads, (and, in my case, to think of sailing any boat but a *Hustler!*) Nevertheless, there are other boats, and other places, to sail, and some of them are quite fun. After all, the challenges are the same; to get where you want to go to or at least, where you will settle for - despite the best efforts of wind and tide to obstruct you; it's just that the challenges come in different forms and the tool you have - the boat - to defeat them might not be a gunter-rigged sloop.

A few years ago, I decided to try deep-sea sailing. I booked a place on the "Stavros Niarchos", a bigish sailing brig run by the Youth Sail Training Association. I had previously been inveigled into a weekend aboard her for a very gentle cruise round the Isle of Wight, starting and finishing in Southampton. It was very much a "gentlemen's weekend", with the Island always within sight and, given that we had almost idyllic weather, not exactly terrifying! Nevertheless, those who wanted to do so- there were so many "gentlemen" crew aboard that only about half of them were needed to do anything- had a chance to try our hands at climbing the rigging, keeping watch and helping the expert (permanent) crew with things like setting and furling sails.

I enjoyed the experience, so a few months later I found myself on a Ryanair 737 bound from Gatwick to Tenerife for a whole week of "proper" sailing (as the captain insisted!). What they didn't tell us was that

we had less than half the number of people we had had round the Isle of Wight, so everybody had to do everything. Stopped us getting bored, I suppose.

The first thing we had to do once we had found our bunks and stowed our gear, was the "Up-and-Over" which meant climbing the starboard rigging as far as the maintop, crossing over from one side of the mast to the other and climbing down the port side. Of course, the first part of the climb meant getting on to the gunwales and climbing up the ratlines - without anywhere to clip our safety harness onto. The last bit into the maintop was a vertical metal ladder- Jack Aubrey would have found it ridiculously easy-where we could clip on. Very reassuring, except that the first part of going down was a step into the unknown where we just had to believe that the ladder would be there when we went to put a foot on it! (It was.)

Once we had mastered that, the next step was sail handling. That involved climbing back up to the maintop, unclipping the harness, moving out onto the footrope under the yard, (remembering to shout "Stepping on Port" or "Starboard" as appropriate), clipping on the harness and making our way out along the footrope to our respective stations along the yard, and, leaving go of whatever we were clutching grimly onto, either pull the sail up to the yard and tying the gaskets, (which I would call "sail ties") so the sail was a neat bundle or untying the gaskets so the sail would fall and open for the wind to fill it. "Interesting" is only one of the words you might use to describe the experience! And remember,

the first time we did it, we were safely moored in harbour; the next times, we were out at sea and bobbing gaily up and down.

Rope handling was also fun. A “watch” of about six people would pull on a rope until the yard was hoisted as far as necessary; an experienced permanent crew member would coil a length of line (a “stopper”) round the standing part of the rope and make it fast to a handy belaying pin- rather larger than those to be found on a *Rebel*. The leader of the watch would call “Ease to the stopper”, and the watch would gently let the fall of the rope slacken until the strain was taken by the stopper. Then the watch leader would make the fall fast round another belaying pin-under pain of keelhauling if he capsized the last turn round the pin and we’d all move on to the next task. With only three watches on board, we all had to buckle to. Good for the soul, I suppose, and at least we ate well and slept well.

It was quite surprising how quickly we all gelled as a crew. The watch leaders were great- they were, of course, used to dealing with people from 16 to 80, so they quickly sussed out who was capable-or incapable of doing what, and found tasks appropriate. Peer pressure, I suppose, wouldn’t let anyone slack; and I vividly remember Anita. She was about 19 and built like a straw that had been on a diet; her rucksack was bigger than she was. The day almost everyone was, at the least, a bit queasy, she was not at her best, but she was tailing onto the end of her rope hardly able to focus, but absolutely determined to do what was needed. We were all proud of her. Of

course, there was a Geordie, at first glance as rough as a brick but a great guy when you got to know him. It was he who was asked by one of the cooks on the “queasy” day “Do you want your breakfast or shall I just throw it straight over the side?”

There was one lady- past the first flush of youth and built more for comfort than speed - who gamely climbed up almost to the maintop on the first day, but couldn’t quite trust herself to do the last few feet and step onto the yard. No-one minded except her! And on the last afternoon, I was in the maintop when she climbed slowly up the shrouds, onto the metal ladder-and stepped off onto the yard. The look of triumph and achievement on her face was incredible!

Life wasn’t always hard work and at sea. We had a morning on one of the islands, doing a little tour-it felt quite odd that the deck wasn’t going up and down under our feet. One of the sites we went to was on a fault-line (the island is volcanic, and the original volcanic cone has been overlaid by another coating of solidified lava) The experts say that, if the overlying cone ever slips, and it is bound to do that sometime, the resulting tsunami will drown Florida and flood New York to a depth of thirty feet. We all jumped on the fault-line, but absolutely nothing happened! You can’t trust these experts, can you?

I managed to do the necessary sail-and-rope handling work, to take bearings to find where we were and steer the ship on a compass course, so all that was left was small-boat handling. As that involved only getting into and out of a small dinghy tied

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up alongside the big ship, rowing a few hundred yards and back again without going round in circles or catching a crab, they gave me my RYA "Competent Crew" certificate.

An advantage of a 600-hp engine is that you can, on the last day, motor back to port against a head wind. It was an absolutely glorious day, with clear blue sky, clear blue sea and enough wind to whip up a lot of white horses. I, having a few minutes off-watch, went forward to enjoy the sun and the breeze. I was just thinking "Why would anyone want to be anywhere else on a day

like this?" when the ship buried her bow in the water, about 10 tons of it came aboard and I was in the middle of it! I'm quite glad to be able to say that it didn't spoil my mood at all once I had got dried out!

This sea-sailing stuff on a biggish ship is no substitute for taking a *Hustler* up from Acle to St Benet's on a fine summer's day with a brisk northerly breeze, but it's quite fun.

Ian R Cartwright

Printed by Century Printing
132 High Street, Stalham Norfolk NR12 9AZ
Tel/Fax 01692 582958
email: info@centuryprinting.co.uk