

HUNTER'S YARD



Newsletter of the Friends of the Hunter Fleet



Festival of Sail, 24 June 2018

(Picture by Jennifer Mack)

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Editorial

Welcome to Issue 63.

Well, we have come to the end of an era. Roger at Century Printing has mixed his last batch of sepia ink (for us anyway) and after 20 years this is the last Hunter's Newsletter to be printed in sepia. But the time has come for a change particularly since there have been such advances in photographic technology and I know you will enjoy the colour photos in the next issue, particularly since I will be printing some of the winning entries in the photo competition (last entry date 7 September).

This packed edition shows just how much is always going on at the Yard - see photo gallery on p.9,10 and there is a lovely selection of contributions from Friends of all ages.

The more eagle-eyed among you will have noticed that Linda Aspland's name is not among the committee members.

Linda, who joined the committee in 2011 and resigned at our last meeting, was a very active and committed member of the committee; we shall miss her input and involvement in many of the committee's activities, but hope to still see her at the Yard.

I hope you are able to enjoy the remainder of the sailing season and look forward to seeing you at the Autumn Event on 15 September, see details on p.5.

Christine

COPY DATE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 10 OCTOBER 2018

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The Chairman's Ramble

First I must apologise for my absence at the AGM, due entirely, I regret to say, to my failure to note future events on our kitchen calendar. I would like to thank the Vice Chairman for standing in for me at such short notice. The whole event went very smoothly and I would also like to thank the other members of the committee, the volunteers, and the staff of the boatyard who put so much effort into ensuring that this happens. I think I have commented before on the metaphor of the swan cruising serenely above the water whilst the legs are paddling like mad underneath.

Many thanks to all the members of the Friends for coming.

I have just spent a couple days with friends sailing on *Lucent* and have personal experience of the effectiveness of the electric motor which, as we all know, has caused so much soul searching, controversy and expense.

Speaking purely for myself, I have to say that, for one who may be considered to be of riper years, the problems of light and contrary winds, contrary tides, and the tight schedule of my trip enabled us to travel from Stokesby to Salhouse Broad via the hell of the heavily wooded reaches above Horning, and back to Thurne in 2 days, something which would have otherwise been impossible without hours of quanting.

That said, it also raised the much discussed subject of the insidious effect that having an auxiliary motor has on the psyche of the otherwise die hard sailors, of necessity, doing it the right way!

There is no doubt in my mind that we were all much more relaxed about the taxing conditions, knowing that, if the worst happened, we could always get out of it by turning the motor on.

We must, however, also remember that the customers who hire our “lovely ladies” come for an otherwise unique holiday experience on traditional broads sailing yachts, and as has been said so many times before, many of those “die hard sailors” who have supported the Yard and all that it stands for, for many years, are no longer able to manage without some assistance.

As for the installation itself, I can only say the controls are simplicity itself, the engine smooth/free of vibration, and so much quieter than a diesel. I fear that for those of us who have been unofficially/informally racing other hire yachts on the broads for years may be tempted by its silence to “close the gap” by subtle application of the motor, otherwise known as cheating in a friendly sport!!!

What has been lost is storage space under the stairs for the folding table!

One thing that should be said is that, if you are using the engine it is very important to keep an eye on the fuel level i.e. battery power which is clearly displayed in the control panel. Electric top up points are not quite as easy to find, but again easy to use, when you find one.

All that can be left for me personally, to say is that, the installation and operation, are excellent, a tribute to the staff at the Yard and the planning that has gone before. It is still far too early to decide if the reality of the cost and return on investment has made

it worthwhile.

And now for something different.

On a final and slightly doom laden note the glorious rain free weather which we have been experiencing for so long is of course having an effect on the water levels on the broads which are not as high as normal at the moment. In 1976 a similar period of dry weather resulted in a reduction of freshwater flowing to the sea and salt water levels rising in the upper reaches of the rivers and causing all sorts of problems for the wildlife. Nothing has been said about it yet but I must say that I think it is definitely time for rain and a lot of it!

I hope I won't be shot for even thinking, let alone writing such awful thoughts.

Rodney Longhurst

Membership News

Newsletter Archive

Have you looked at the Hunters Website recently? If so you might have noticed that we have now got a complete archive of all the newsletters at <https://www.huntersyard.co.uk/friends/newsletter/>

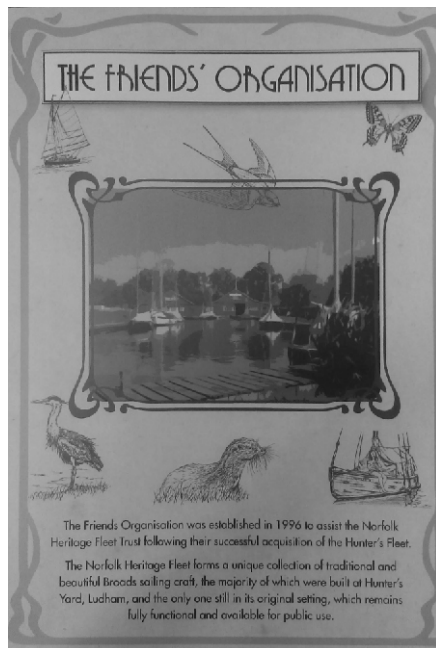
This would not have been possible without the help from Century Printing, Woodland Software, Ian Cartwright & David Clarke which enabled us to collate, digitise, design and implement the web page.

We are now in the process of collating all of the Hunters calendars. These will similarly be available to view on the website.

We were again blessed with brilliant sunshine at the AGM with a good sailing breeze in the afternoon. Just over 80 people

attended with most enjoying the wildlife walk and skippered sails.

Our new Membership Form is now on display around the Yard and we recently welcomed our 965th member to the Friends.



A few members have already taken up the half price first year's membership of the **Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT)** which is open to all Hunter's Yard Friends and hirers (see p.16). If you would like to take up this opportunity just contact their membership team quoting HY50. The NWT team regularly host walks for us during our events. We are hoping to work with them to provide child friendly activities around the Yard throughout the year. Thus encouraging interest in the Hunters Fleet and Norfolk Wildlife for years to come.

Photo Competition

This year's Friends of the Hunter Fleet Photo Competition opened on 1st April 2018.

Categories: **Children** - under 18; **Adults** - 18 and over.

To enter just send your picture of 'a moment in time' whilst sailing one of Percy's boats to: -
louise.hopkinson@huntersyard.co.uk

Last entry date 7th September 2018.
Winners to be announced at the Autumn Picnic on 15th September 2018.

Louise Hopkinson

Friends Events, 2018;2019

Autumn Sailing Picnic: Saturday 15th September 2018

Our Autumn Picnic has evolved over the years to become a celebration of the Hunters Boats. You may have the chance to take the helm under the direction of one of our superb skippers in one of 'Percy's Ladies'. I will endeavour to organise, but cannot guarantee, a sail on your favourite boat.

Jeremy Halls, from English Nature, will be running guided wildlife walks in and around Horsefen, which will include a spot of pond dipping.

For those of you who wish not to sail we will have one of the Nancy Oldfield boats at the Yard for a morning and afternoon cruise. There is special pleasure in watching the yachts tacking back and forth out on the river.

New for 2018:

One of my childhood pleasures was rowing down the river. During lunch, you will now be able to use one of the yards dinghies to teach your child or grandchild this ancient art. Perhaps you would just prefer to spend 20 minutes absorbing the delights of Womack Water. *Please book on the day.*



Two Day Skipped Sails 2019

16th- 21st June and 14th - 19th July

This will be the eleventh year that we have been running the sails and we shall be enjoying the river north of Potter Heigham's Medieval Bridge. During the two days you will enjoy a wildness and a perceived emptiness that is unique to this part of Norfolk. The reed beds along Meadow Dyke are now filled with the booming of the Bittern. Cranes are now almost a guaranteed sighting as are the once very rare Marsh Harrier and Bearded Tits. We have ONE place left on the first week and the second week is booking up well.

Neil Hopkinson

Friends Write....

From Philip Barlow, Whitby, North Yorkshire

Dear Christine,

Thank you for all the information that came from Hunters Yard and the two Issues 58 and 59 that I received as a new Friend. I must be unusual as I have very little sailing experience but I have a love of old ways, boats and of course the Broads.

My visit the first time was in 1946. I was eight years old and came from North Yorkshire with my sister and brother in a Morris Ten. I remember getting up very early and that the car was full of big cardboard boxes full of food. My brother was fourteen and he had made a menu chart of the food we would have each day. I don't remember much about the holiday except that the motor cruiser had a bath cabin!

1952 and I was back with my sister in a boat called *Meadowsweet*. The exciting thing was that she was towing a lovely varnished sailing dinghy.

I spent every available moment in that dinghy. When we were motoring from Broad to Broad my father let me take the wheel. One morning will stay in my memory forever, sunshine and strong wind. We came up with two varnished yachts, obviously racing. The leading one crewed by young men the other crewed by teenage girls.

The river was narrow and there was a bend, the yachts lost their wind and had to make short tacks. It was exciting for me to pay round their sterns as they went about. The flapping and bang of the sails and the sound of the blocks, the river all churned with the

wake crossing and the tremendous enthusiasm of the crews working hard. I fell in love with the yachts and the girls!

1968 I returned with my wife and we hired an auxiliary gunter sloop, *Leading Lady* from Herbert Woods, I think. Unfortunately my wife Christine became ill, the start of a pregnancy with complications. So we didn't do any sailing, oh dear.



1982 we were back with two teenage daughters. I had hoped we could have hired a yacht but Christine had memories of her first experience of sailing. But it did not matter as it was a week of "low pressure", dark and foggy. We still had great fun and visited all the old flint churches.

After about fifteen years, we returned to a craft called *Compass Countess* This one would go under Potter Heigham bridge and we had a sailing dinghy. It was a hot week and very still, not good for sailing but there is always fun to be had on the Broads. Friday evening came all too quickly. The girls and I were ready to go to the pub for the last meal. We had moored at Thurne Dyke. Christine was still getting ready. Suddenly there was a gust of wind, then more wind, I thought, I am going to have a last sail! Into the dinghy and I am out into

the river Thurne intending to go up towards Ludham. Opposite Thurne Dyke there are, I think, some willows and an old chalet which provided shelter from the westerly wind. So once clear, the next gust of wind laid me flat! Surprise! Fortunately the mast came clear and the dinghy righted and I swam around collecting all the gear. Emma came to the river bank and everything was accounted for. We got to the pub in time for a good meal and a beer or two.

2009 found us at Ferry Marina with *Crystal 2*, but no sailing dinghy, not available. Good holiday. No excitement except the three girls thought I would have heart attack climbing the tower at St Helen's church at Malthouse Broad.

So that's it. We were going to come this year (2017) but Emma lives and works in Switzerland and it all takes a lot of organizing. Next year we will definitely come, we will get a craft that we can moor as near as possible to Hunters Yard. Emma and Sara will look after Christine because she has dementia. And I will sneak off for some hours of skippered sailing before I lose my mobility.

Regards,

Philip Barlow

PS On 10th July Peter took a gentleman out for a 2 hour skippered sail. On returning home he told me a little about him and the details were sounding very familiar. On asking his name, it was indeed Philip giving himself his promised sail which I understand he thoroughly enjoyed!

From Christopher Bishop

Looking through back numbers, 61 and 62,

I would like to comment on the items written by Rodney Longhurst. Regarding the overgrown banks and the towering trees these have become more of a nuisance every year. At one time you could nearly always find a bank where you could moor but nowadays it seems that they are fewer and fewer and you are left with moorings alongside pilings and hardly ever need to use rond anchors as there is no rond for them to be put in. Regarding trees I can remember, in the early fifties, walking the boat along Meadow Dyke to Horsey, and even back again with no trees in the way but looking at it nowadays this does not seem possible.

Changing the subject to eating, I feel that while it is sometimes necessary to eat on board, such as when anchoring on a Broad or when there is no pub, if we do not use the eating places on a regular basis they will not be there when we want them the following year. I feel that there are too many owned boats who take all their food with them, take up mooring spaces, especially at Ranworth, and do not contribute to the local economy. Having said that we normally eat breakfast on board and a snack lunch but we try and go ashore for a meal when we can in the evening.

Going on to changes in the boats I wonder how the Hunter family would have felt about making the boats better by using items that are about nowadays and would improve the holiday experience. In this I think the motor on *Lucent* is a good idea which helps novices and older people at no detriment to her sailing quality. These are my thoughts,

Christopher Bishop



From the Yard Vikki Walker Yard Manager

Pictures by Helen Allen, Pat & Philip Bray, Vikki Walker

A big summer time hello to all of you from 'us lot at the Yard'. We've been ticking over nicely; our bookings are about the same as last year which is a good thing, but we would, as always, love to get more people out sailing. So, if you've been putting your visit to the Yard off for this sailing season, please think about coming soon. Don't forget, it won't be too much longer before our lovely 'ole gals' will be coming in for their beauty treatments, so come have a treat while you still can this year.

Now for something a little different - If you came to the AGM earlier this year, then you'll know about our 'joint marketing' venture with, what we think are the last four remaining sailing yacht hire companies on the Norfolk Broads. I'm sorry I did forget to mention it while speaking to you at the AGM, but I believe Philip Bray mentioned it under any other business. The group is called The Norfolk & Suffolk Broads Yacht Owners Association but is kind of trading as 'Broads Sailing'.

The five of us, Eastwood Whelpton, Martham Boats, Swallowtail Boatyard, Oliver's Sailing Holidays and Hunter's had a small event in June called Broads Sailing Festival which went so well we feel it would be good to do it again. This was on the date of Ludham Open Gardens, which is held every other year. We slotted in on the free year and were helped by the Friends of St Catherine's Church to set everything up. There were other 'stalls' across the four locations, Little Holland, Swallowtail Boatyard, The Wherry Trust and Hunter's, who all said they had a good day and hoped we would do it again. During the day we introduced around 99 people to the wonders of sailing, using our two *Rebels* and one of the Whelpton cabin boats. Everyone really did enjoy the day, sailing or just eating, chatting and enjoying the music at Little Holland.

As an introduction to the Broads Sailing Festival we had a "Barn Dance in a Boatshed" the evening before, which was also a great success. There were about 120 people in our shed, plus the volunteer helpers, who all said what a great time they'd had and what a great idea too! Perhaps this is something Hunter's should look at doing on a regular basis?!

The five companies also attended the Norfolk Show together, again, it was successful. Helped no less by the fact that Martham boats had their newest cabin yacht on the pond for viewing. It was actually quite a draw; the stand saw many visitors, and even had about 30 people sign up for taster sails with our 3hrs for £99.00 show offer. These sails were shared between the companies, with some the people taking up the offer within the first two weeks after the show. So.....so far so good.

There be some changes a happening around the Yard - I'm sure some of you have noticed

that we have a couple of new faces at the Yard these days. When Marc left us last November, Curtis Drew joined our team. Curtis then went off to America for some sailing there for a couple of months at the beginning of the season and then returned. While he was gone we asked Jamie Ambercrombie to join us to cover that period; which worked out very well for us.

Shortly after that, Philip Peake, aka Peaky, decided to take early retirement so he and his family could start to enjoy themselves earlier than planned. On top of that John asked to go on a 2-day week, which will help him and us with getting ready for his retirement next March. Yes, I can hear y'all say it, he doesn't look like he's retirement age, and I'd agree with you too! But alas, he is, and will be leaving us next year, although he has said he will be on hand should we need any help. Which made me relax a bit better as I'm sure you can imagine. So, with all these changes in mind, a new boat builder will be joining us in October to work alongside Peaky and John. Because both John and Peaky are happy to help out if needed once they have left us, Ian and I are sure everything will be OK and taken care of. So, don't worry about these changes, we're not.

A big thank you to all of you. Not just for your support with being Friends of Hunter's, but also by some of your very generous donations of not just larger contributions but your time. This can be by helping with the gardening, events, sailing and even ideas on how to increase our exposure. All of which is very valuable and very much appreciated, thank you all so much.

Until next time, we wish you fair winds in a great boat! (always a Hunter's of course!).

Vikki

PHOTO GALLERY



AGM, MAY 2018 (above).

(Right) ITV presenter Jonathon Wills came to the Yard to film for a programme featured within the ITV Anglia News called "Now and Then". This picture shows how it looked as though he was sailing Valiant; in reality he was being pushed along by Curtis in the Dory!



PHOTO GALLERY

*Images from the Broads Sailing Festival and Barn Dance
and Hunters at the Royal Norfolk Show (bottom)*



JUNIOR HUNTERS

Here is an excerpt from the winning entry in the 2017 Junior log book competition. An account of one family's holiday on the Broads, full of unexpected events, written by Polly Dudin.

Our adventure in “Lullaby”

Captain: Leo

Crew: Melissa, Annie, Polly, Ruby.

Saturday 12/8/17 Day 1

We pulled up at Hunters Yard, everyone buzzing with excitement! This week was going to be an amazing experience for all of us, we could not wait to see the boats. After a warm welcome in the reception we were shown our boats: for us it was *Lullaby* and for our grandparents *Wood Sorrel* both equally beautiful.

Once we were settled in, we (Polly and Ruby) were eager to explore so we set off in our little rowing boat. When we thought we had got the hang of it we tied onto *Lullaby* to stop for some snack. After having clambered back into the boat we began to row. 5 minutes later after realising that no matter how hard we pulled we were not getting anywhere our Captain(Leo) laughing told us that we were still tied on ! Instantly we began laughing so much we almost fell out of the boat.

After a delicious chicken curry and a slice of scrummy chocolate cake we settled down for our first night on *Lullaby*.

Sunday 13/8/17 Day 2

After a breakfast of bacon we began to prepare the boats for the day ahead. Ruby was about to board our rowing boat to tie onto the back of *Lullaby* when SPLASH, she fell in. Luckily Captain Leo was quick

to the rescue and soon she was clean and dry again. Once the boats were rigged we set sail to Potter Heigham where we were planning on going under the bridge. We could see the bridge in the distance, we were nearly there, but disaster strikes and our granny who was quanting tripped and fell into the murky water below. In a flash a man from a nearby boat ran out and hauled her to the safety of the bank. From our boat we couldn't make out what was going on but through our binoculars we realised that she wasn't using her left arm, had she dislocated it! Has she broken it? 30 minutes later a paramedic arrived and took her back to hospital to have an X-ray! During the anxious wait we decided to have an ice cream. Delicious! Later on we received news and were sad to hear she had broken her arm and it would be the end of her holiday. All of us a bit down, headed off to bed hoping that tomorrow would be better.

Monday 14/8/17 Day 3

Waking up to a day of sunshine, we ate breakfast and lowered the mast ready to go under the bridges. We quanted our way to the bridges and successfully passed through both of them. Mooring on the other side we stopped for a snack and raised the sails. There was a strong breeze as we set sail for Hickling. On the way we met two other Hunter boats - we both complemented each other on our choice of boat . When we arrived at Hickling it was a real challenge to get the boat moored on due to strong wind. A few hours later we met our grandparents to have a meal in the Pleasure Boat Inn. it was absolutely delicious but very filling, we would

definitely recommend the crab salad. We said good bye and settled down in our snugly beds with a nice full stomach.

PS Before our pub meal we had been rowing and Ruby fell in AGAIN!

Tuesday 15/8/17 Day 4

We woke up and got dressed for the day ahead. As we were eating breakfast (blueberry and apple granola) granny who had driven over from their B&B walked over to our boat with a bag full of games. The first game we played was MOBI which is a maths bananagram game. We would definitely recommend buying it. Then we did some metal puzzles where you have to separate and reconnect the pieces of metal. It was really hard but we got there in the end. Once we had eaten lunch we drove to Horsey beach. As the golden sand tickled our toes we strolled down the beach looking for seals. As we walked along we saw at least FIFTY seal heads pop up and down in the water. When we were nearing the end of the beach we saw an amazing sight in front of us-sunbathing on the beach were hundreds of seals of all different colours, shapes and sizes. As we looked closer we noticed that there was one with a net caught around its neck. After having received a call from the RSPB the seal wardens had arrived hoping to cut the net off. As they tried to catch the seal all of the seals scattered and in 3 seconds all the seals had fled seeking the water leaving the seal wardens alone.

We left the beach and headed back to the boat. We went out for a quick row and played a game of ball. We said goodbye to granny and grandpa then we tucked

ourselves up in bed and soon fell asleep.

Wednesday 16/8/17 Day 5

We woke up and after eating breakfast we went out for our last row on Hickling broads. We tied onto the back of *Lullaby* once again and waited for grandpa to join us for today's sail. When he had arrived, we quanted to the middle of Hickling broad and dropped the mud anchor. We raised the sails and headed off towards Potter Heigham. Successfully passing under the bridges we stopped for some lunch and bought some ice creams. Sailing off again we quanted towards Hunter Yard. We were about half way there but it was getting harder for Captain Leo to quant any more because of the wind, tide and mud. Luckily a passing motor boat offered us a tow. Gratefully accepting we caught the rope and tied it to our boat. When there was enough wind we got going again. We thanked them untied our boat and raised the sails. We sailed our way back to Hunter's Yard looking forward to a shower. Mum and Annie jumped off the boat and tied their ropes around the post so that we were moored on. Grandpa and Captain Leo took a car to pick up granny. When they arrived back we played a game. Before our delicious pasta and ratatouille meal we went out for an evening row. We saw a grebe and barn owl hunting. We all went back to the boat. We said goodbye and settled down in our beds for a good night sleep.

Polly Dudin

The Gaff Rig

This article came about after Philip discovered that a booking agency was recommending first time Broads sailors to book Bermudan rig boats because “they were easier”. “What tosh” says Philip.

From early days, boats had always used the square sail which is the most efficient rig with the wind behind and this was adequate for long sea journeys. However, the Vikings had developed techniques for making better use of a square sail to work to windward. The problem was to get the luff tight. Their boats had no shrouds to hinder the yard: they pulled the tack down hard and forward by the use of bowlines and bowline cringles. The boat didn't point very high but it worked.

The square-rig was used on inland waterways too and the Norfolk keel, the fore-runner of the wherry, had a squaresail on a mast stepped amidships. This was adequate until merchants and passengers wanted quicker passage times between Norwich and the port at Great Yarmouth.

The spritsail had evolved in the Low Countries in the 14th century: it was more efficient in twisting rivers and canals and a large sail could be handled by a small crew. When not in use the sail was brailed up to the mast. The gaff rig evolved from the spritsail: the luff of the spritsail was gradually lengthened and the sprit was set progressively higher up the mast to reduce its length and weight until it assumed the length and angle of the head of the sail.

It was then held aloft by throat and peak halyards and became the 'standing gaff' which still relied on brails for furling. The

gaff as we know it now was the next development.

By 1550 the square-rigged sail had practically disappeared from the waterways of north-west Europe. It continued in England because the inland watermen had no direct contact with the continent but in 1568 there was a revolt in the Netherlands against the religious persecutions by the Spanish. More than three thousand fled their country and settled in Norfolk and Suffolk (the 'Strangers'). They came in whatever boats they could, whether suitable for a sea crossing or not, and brought with them the gaff rig. The keelmen noted the efficiency of the gaff rig for inland use and soon (within a year) started building gaff-rigged boats. Wherries developed over the years using the gaff rig and were easily handled by a crew of two.

By 1880 John Loynes had already gained a reputation as a boat builder and hirer of boats for cruising. He developed the traditional Norfolk Broads cabin yacht especially for these waters shallow draft, a gaff rig supported by a mast in a tabernacle, lifting cabin top and rails to support an awning over the well. He used the gaff rig because it could provide a large sail area high up to catch the wind above reeds and trees but on a short mast which is easier to stay and easier for passing under bridges.

Gaff rigged boats are ideally suited to the Broads and they are quicker and easier to tack in narrow waterways so why sail anything but a gaff rig on the Broads?

Philip Bray

(Philip has a list of references used in this research)

FROM THE 2017 LOG BOOKS

Here is an interesting account of an owner of a Dutch heritage boatyard holidaying on one of our heritage fleet last July.

THE NETHERLANDS

Our fun began a few days ago when Philomee and IJsbrand suggested not to go camping in Switzerland, near Interlaken, but to go to the broads instead to hire a yacht at Hunters Yard just like we did three years ago (*Luna* as my younger daughter Lidewij made 4 of us). We were quite lucky that *Wood Avens* was still available at such short notice!

Before leaving there were still a few matters to attend to at our own traditional boatyard in Warmond. On Tuesday we were asked to provide a little boat to be used for the recording at the nearby castle Oud Poelgeest. So we quickly painted the floors and deck which had just been sanded and lowered the oak built rowing and sailing boat *Pandora* from the boatyard shed. No leakage as she had just undergone a

through restoration (new bottom and port side plank). On Wednesday morning she was rowed to Oud Poelgeest as part of a “country fair” in the movie “Gek van geluk”. On Thursday we had to deliver a little grundle call “Huibertje” to her owner who is going to sail with her in the northern part of Holland. We did some caulking small repairs and varnishing to make her look smart again.

Finally we could start packing to take the ferry from Hook of Holland to Harwich on Friday. It was lovely to simply do nothing but a bit of reading (copies of a story about Loynes sent to me by Philip Bray last year and the Annual Report of the Fries Scheepvaart Museum) for a few hours on the ferry.



NORFOLK

After a drive to Ludham it was great to find John's note on the door saying we could directly" check in" to *Wood Avens*.

On **Saturday 22 July** our Hunters holiday really started. Nice to see Vikki again who just returned from holidays.

Ian briefly showed us how to lower the mast and just after noon we got under way with the intention to do some sailing westward, have an early dinner and pass the bridges at Potter Heigham low tide at 1900hr. We moored to have a look at St Benet's Abbey then Philomee made pancakes. After I (dad) had coffee and done the dishes our plan to sail to Potter Heigham was ditched due to the wind suddenly dropping from 3 to 4 to none....so we made some walks instead.

Sunday July 23rd. We sailed to Potter Heigham. As the mast of a broads yacht can be even easier than our own tjotter (9 meters of mast on a boat of just 4.8 m ,90kg counter weight) we lowered the mast on the go and slipped under the beautiful old bridge of Potter Heigham just before high water having wind and current in our back . We moored beyond the bridges to do some shopping and then continued for Horsey Mere. What a beautiful and quiet area, although we met a lot of Hunter's yachts. On the way we saw two elderly men fishing in a little boat. The name of the boat made us smile "Coffin Dodgers", great!

At Horsey Philomee and I went for a walk. IJsbrand had a nap (19 year olds need a lot of sleep.)

Being born and raised at the wide Dutch dunes, I was surprised at the short distance

from the walk to the dunes and the very narrow row of dunes. Of course the difference is that Holland is on the shore of the North Sea. So the seals that surprised us with their curious gazes are quite right to linger on the Norfolk coast and not on the opposite shore.

Monday July 24

After hearing our enthusiastic story about the beach and the seals IJsbrand wanted to go there as well of course. So on a beautiful sunny morning we walked along the golden grain fields and light green meadows to the coast again. It was lovely. After returning to Horsey, we had lunch and a shower.

Even before we left from Holland the forecast was a southern wind on Saturday and Sunday and a northern wind on Monday and Tuesday. Perfect for a trip north and indeed the wind had changed to the north so we could easily sail from Horsey Mere to Hickling Broad. At the end of Meadow Dyke we thought we could cut the corner to starboard when we came to a gentle halt. We were proved wrong. Slackening the main sheet and a push with the quant from the bow moved *Wood Avens* gently through the mud and on our way again.

In contrast to the sunny weather in the morning, it started to rain. We moored and waited for the worst part to blow over. Then we sailed on to Hickling on a long port tack just clear of the red poles. After having dinner at the Pleasure Boat Inn including WiFi and power to recharge mobile phones we had a little walk which turned out more than two hours taking us all the way down

to the south eastern side of Hickling Broad, around the nature reserve, by the bittern observation hut etc. returning after dark. It was wonderful! .Especially the thatched roofed boathouses are inspiringly beautiful. We had a drink at the Inn, wrote postcards (Dad) and communicated with the rest of the world via whatsapp.

Tuesday July 25th

Our last day, alas. Philomee baked pancakes for breakfast.

With a fair wind from the north we sailed much too quickly to Potter Heigham (1hour). As it wouldn't be high tide until 15:00 and the current would prevent us from passing the old bridge we did some shopping. Amongst others we bought six Spode Italian Blue plates at Lathams for

our boatyard at home, to remember our lovely trip on the broads every time.

Passed the bridges without a problem at dead tide. Sailed on and could not resist to go a little beyond Hunters Yard. Turned around at the mill and met Albion for the second time. What a magnificent ship. Finally tacked into the Yard. Cooked our meal. Said good bye and thanks to Vikki and Philip who were still at the Yard. After doing the dishes and cleaning up we had a lovely walk along the dyke. Set the alarm for 5:30 to drive off at 6 in order to catch the ferry in Harwich at 9.00. Thanks to all at Hunters Yard and hope to be back soon!

*Alexander de Vos,
Leiden, The Netherlands*

IMAGE: RICHARD OSBOURNE



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 Registered charity no. 208734

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Printed by Century Printing
132 High Street, Stalham Norfolk NR12 9AZ
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