

HUNTER'S YARD



Newsletter of the Friends of the Hunter Fleet



All together now... Another successful autumn picnic - Picture by Jill Donley

In this issue

Editorial - Zoë King 2
The (Vice) Chair Types 3
Membership News - Jennifer Mack 4
Friends Write 5
Memories - Will Hoedeman 6

Autumn Event - Philip Bray 8
Two Day Sail - Neil Hopkinson 10
From the Yard - Vikki Walker 11
Hustler 5 at Acle Bridge - Jem Coady 14
'The Back Page' 16

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Editorial

You did it again! Thanks so much to everyone who has let me have contributions for the newsletter. Space considerations mean I'm not able to use them all this time, but they're in a safe place and will no doubt appear in future issues.

I enjoy seeing the different approaches Friends take, and in this issue, you'll find a cautionary tale 'in the style of' the redoubtable Willie McGonagall, the 'best worst Scottish poet ever', and more sailing memories from Friends old and new, one of which features a watercolour picture. Both poem and picture may well be firsts for us.

I've had a lot of pictures from the September sailing picnic too, many of which I'm not able to use, but my thanks to everyone who took the trouble to send them in. And if YOU want to share your thoughts and memories... well, you know how to contact me.

The boats are now in the sheds for the winter, and it strikes me that another year has passed without me setting foot on a Hunter. *This will not do!* Next spring, I have promised myself a two-hour sail. I can't make the Saturday events these days as I work on Saturday mornings, so I do feel as though I'm missing out. Which means, I want *more* of your memories of your sailing days with our wonderful 'lovely ladies'. Meanwhile, here's hoping for a merry Christmas for everyone, and a good new year to follow. *Zoë*

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COPY DATE FOR NEXT ISSUE: 1 February, 2010

The (Vice) Chair types...

My first duty as acting chairman must be to offer the profuse thanks of the Friends to Andy for his marathon stint in the chair. No one could have done more or, better. Ten years in a job he did not even ask for. Who could ask for more? Stay with us Andy.

What a marvelous season 2009 has been, apart from a wet July, we seem to have had wall to wall sunshine and, especially during August, enough wind for anyone. I for one confess to leaving *Sapphire's* mainsail reefed for four weeks. I saw many Hunter yachts sailing reefed during this period, most reefs very well tucked in and all sailing extremely well. From sixty odd years of Broads sailing, I know that shallow draught yachts go badly to windward if allowed to heel too much. The keel becomes inefficient and leeway increases proportionately. I see this willingness to reef as a sign that the hirers are becoming more skilful and more careful of the 'lovely ladies'. The fact that we had less damage than might otherwise have occurred during this period of high winds, would tend to support this - well, I am an optimist, though, like Graham, I do touch a lot of wood.

Autumn Event - 26th September 2009

There was no need for reefs on this day. Some might have wished for a little more wind, but there was enough. All boats were well able to stem the tide when necessary though little of this was strictly necessary as the tide obligingly changed while we were enjoying our picnics and gave us a fair tide both ways. The sun shone, the company was excellent, conversation flowed and a good time was had by all. Rodney Longhurst carried out the duties of Beachmaster with admirable efficiency and all boats displayed superb seamanship in approaching the

mooring. This boat handling was repeated when they returned to the yard.

As usual the organisation was seamless. Philip Bray had it all planned. It was all there, in large print, with each boat's crew and skipper clearly designated and, when anything went wrong, such as a designated skipper being unable to perform, a substitution was made and Philip's smile hardly altered. That is what I call true organisational flair and ability. Thank you Philip.

All in all, an enjoyable day, shared by over 100 Friends.

Help for the Trust

This is what the Friends of the Hunter Fleet is all about, isn't it, apart from having a good time and making new friends in the process. Why does the Trust need help? Strictly speaking, it doesn't. It runs the yard on sound commercial lines, the boats are kept in first class order and any profit is salted away to provide income to subsidise the use of the fleet by youth groups and schools. So, where does your money go? Well, I suppose that, like me, you became Friends because you are quietly proud of this unique fleet of superb yachts. Being proud of them means that we take enormous interest in the way they are presented to the hirers. That they are always immaculately clean, we take for granted. No hire boat staff ever had higher standards. Both yard staff and the Trust make sure all equipment is well and truly serviceable.

Sails, awnings, lifejackets etc are all replaced well before they come to the end of their useful lives. We do know that a tired looking awning can still be perfectly watertight but give a feeling of gloom, especially in cloudy weather, that sails too can look tired, long before they become

unserviceable. Lifejackets can still be well up to their job but take on a used appearance. The same applies to practically every other item of equipment. The Friends' little extra money allows all these things to be replaced before it is strictly necessary. This, we believe, enhances the hiring experience of these wonderful boats and we of course, benefit more than most.

Unlike human beings, wooden boats can be made to last, if not for ever, at least for a very long time. All you have to do is to cut out all the bits of damage and rot and stick a bit of new wood in, or fit new rudder, or keel bolts or whatever. Wonderful isn't it, and these items, together with timber, are more of the items purchased. We're very lucky to have craftsmen like Graham and his colleagues, with not only the skill to diagnose these defects, but also the integrity and ability to remedy them and to come up with ideas for improvements.

How to Sail

I look forward with great interest to the production of the 'How to Sail' DVD which is being filmed by my old friend Peter Hollingham. I understand emphasis is being placed on coming in to moor on the bank and, in particular, back at the yard. My own view is that there is a steady rise in the average standard of seamanship among the hirers but I still see examples of my own pet hate, namely mainsails being hoisted and even lowered straight from the crutches. The correct procedure is to take the weight of the boom on the topping lift and stow the crutches before hoisting, and to take the weight on the topping lift before lowering the sail. There is time enough to lower the boom into the crutches once the sail is safely down.

Les Gee

October 2009

Membership News

My optimism about ending the year on a positive note has been justified as we have signed up some 70 new Friends during 2009 thanks to our website Application Forms and Vikki's continuing efforts. It looks as though membership will total over 850 after some sad losses and non-renewals have been taken into account.

It's marvellous to know that the Friends' enthusiasm has overcome the economic gloom of the past year. This was particularly evident at September's Sailing Picnic, with record numbers attending, including many younger members, which can only bode well for the future. There was certainly a heart-warming 'buzz' in the Yard, only partly due to the good weather!

I am pleased to report that you can now view the current Newsletter on the website in the Members Section of the Friends' page. The Log-in password from now until this time in 2010 is 'Percy'; it will be changed when subscriptions are due again.

It's that time of year when you will have a subscription reminder from me for 2010 if you pay by cheque. As always, please get in touch if you would like to pay by Bankers Order or, alternatively, download a form from the Friends' page on the website.

SOS

If Dr J C Long or anyone who knows him or her is reading this, please get in touch with me. I have a cheque from them but have no trace of their Membership or whereabouts!

Thank you all for your good humour, tremendous support and loyalty throughout the year, and best wishes for Christmas and 2010.

Jennifer Mack

October 2009

Friends Write

From John Wroughton, Truro

The booking form for the Sailing Picnic spurred me into writing about memories of sailing from Womack many years ago. My father was a casual friend of Percy Hunter from pre-war days, when I was first introduced to the Broadland waters.

However, the recent television showing of Griff Rhys Jones' travels from Womack reminded me that I was one of a part of student architects, who hired two of the Wood boats in, I think, 1947 and 1948. We had a wonderful week for the first year, and heavy rain and gales for the second, when we were blown across Ranworth Broad overnight.

My future wife was in the crew of Wood Violet, I think, and I was on Wood Rose. Griff's passage under Potter Bridge brought back vivid memories, but we had some wonderful journeys across and round Hickling and on Horsey Mere too, in the earlier year, when the water was crystal clear.

I have not been able to sail for many years now, but my grandson now earns his living on the water - at sea - after growing up near Warsash and being a devotee of laser sailing, having started on a Wayfarer at Mylor, near Truro.

Thank you for keeping me on the mailing list; it always brings back very happy memories of things a 'lifetime' ago.

John Wroughton

From Robin Webb

Zoe, your piece about the nighttime trip on *Ra* really brought back a memory for me. It wasn't in a Hunter for obvious reasons, but in my little Skipper (which lives in the dyke during the summer), and it was during the Three Rivers Race in 2003. In case you are not familiar with this event it is a sort of 24 hour watery treasure hunt, starting at noon one day and finishing at the following midday. The challenge is to place numbered tokens in floating barrels at Ludham Bridge, South Walsham Broad, Hickling Broad and Stokesby/Tracey Arms, i.e. sailing the three rivers Ant, Bure and Thurne, in as short a time as possible, but within the 24 hours. This of course entails sailing through the night and that was the magical bit.

We came up from Acle to Potter Heigham in the early hours of a moonless night, ghosting along on the flood in total silence with a mere breath of a following breeze, on a ribbon of silver edged with the dense black of the reeds and their reflections in the water. There was a faint mist rising from the water, being lit by the red and green navigation lights, and the whole experience was truly ethereal. We were brought back to reality when the breeze gave out altogether just short of Potter, and we had to moor up with no hope of completing the course. However, the next year we succeeded with twenty minutes to spare, but without the magic of the previous year's night sail.

Nothing to do with Hunters, but I just wanted to share the memory!

Robin Webb

Memories: Getting into water, boats, and sailing

Will Hoedeman

I've been told I first got into water at the age of around two, when my mother dragged me out of the canal round the back of our house in Holland, saving me from drowning.

That morning I had been playing in the garden, safe from roaming too far by the garden fence and gate. And having a penchant for exploring even at that early age, when the garden gate had been left insecure by brothers and sister rushing to school, the attraction of water proved irresistible! Mother was warned by her 6th sense that something was amiss and rushed to avert a 'worst case scenario' disaster: "there he is, where the bubbles come up!"

This watery experience fortunately did nothing to quell the attraction of water for young Willem, and in years to come I had many adventures with the locally available fleet, consisting of a 16ft wooden punt, and a larger 24ft iron punt, both working boats on the estate where my father was head gardener. These boats were used for a multitude of tasks, ranging from dredging the surrounding canals to the satisfaction of the Drainage Board, to shifting mountains of autumn leaves for composting and grass clippings from mowing the acres of lawns. Fortunately drying wet clothes in the warmth of the boiler house or glass houses meant that parents did not always find out what the latest watery adventure had been!

So at age 10, my boat handling skills were well developed, and regular trips were made during holidays, punting and paddling to a large nearby lake, about 1 mile

square, and actually formed by peat digging, just like the Broads. You can imagine a grubby little black-tarred square-ended mud punt mixing it with all the 16m 2 gaff-rigged posh boats, not to mention Flying Dutchmans and Stars! But we, my little brothers and I, had a fantastic time, and were determined to get into REAL sailing!

One holiday the wooden punt was rigged up with a mast made from a long old dredging pole, square rigger-style yardarms attached with 3 square sails, main, royal and topgallant. All made from bed sheets and sacking I recall. Sailing performance was distinctly un-dramatic: but a breeze from straight astern worked. At all other points of the wind, we had to work with the quanting pole. Hunters boats certainly sail better I have to admit now, but at the time... Paradise!

During teenage years, sailing took a turn for the better after elder sister Lydia bought a house on the river Maas, and with it a Wayfarer type dinghy. On this boat I learned to do things properly, as reward for building a jetty for the boat, L-shaped to allow for sailing off in all wind directions. Lots of racing followed and many friends were made, including some very special ones during lazy forays into the reed beds! On hot days we also practiced capsizing, sometimes continually. I try not to do this with Hunter yachts!

Later, having moved to England, Broads sailing started with the hire of Herbert Woods' sailing yachts in the late 60's with

friend and later young family. We sailed several of the 'Lady' class, also *Twilight*, now at Horning and *Reed Bunting* which I recall was a horrible hybrid.

Our sailing schedules were greatly assisted by habitual use of engine. Typically the plan was to cover the distance from Potter to Lowestoft between Saturday afternoon and Tuesday, then back to the Northern rivers with a final day on Barton Broad, Hickling, or Horsey Mere. Was this sailing? Well, yes, but mostly cheating too, whenever conditions were not perfect the put-put was got going! And hardly a single landfall was made under sail. Although we studied avidly the technique of passing under the Great Yarmouth bridges with tide running out by turning into current and wind, then drifting back on the mud weight, whilst dropping sail and mast. Have any of the Hunter sailors ever done this, I wonder.

After the mid '70's came a break from sailing in England (some GP14 racing in Sabah Borneo though), until *Blue Peter*, a 24ft John Leather clinker-built gaff-rigged day boat was bought in Whitby. *Blue Peter* was an opportunity to spend a great deal of money with good Northern boatbuilders on repair work, but over 6 years gave little sailing. Eventually sense prevailed and a return to Broads sailing could not be resisted.

Now I've had six years again sailing the Broads with Hunters, with an annual week with family including three grandchildren, as well as the odd half-decker day. We've sailed *Lucent* and *Luna*, *Rebel Reveller*, *Woodcuts*, *Hustlers* and *Brown Bess*. The children now enjoy their watery days as much as I did all those years ago, and love being able to row and sail the Hunter dinghies. What a great thing to pass on this love of freedom and skill across the generations!



Watercolour by Sophie Hoedeman

Autumn Event - Sailing Picnic

The autumn event in September took the format of the popular sailing picnic again - it seems to be a popular format because 125 people booked this year. Great that so many should want to come but it does mean that we have to split the sailing into morning and afternoon sessions. That said, everyone seemed to be having a good time in spite of a lack of wind for the second year running. There was a bit more this year and it did pick up later in the afternoon - at least the sun was shining. After the usual picnic at Thurne (thanks to EACC for the use of their mooring again) Lewis Williams took the *Princess Katherine* and her passengers on a trip to South Walsham Broad with the opportunity also of seeing some of the Lovely Ladies sailing.

After eight years of organising this event I am passing the job on to Neil Hopkinson so thank you all for your support and kind messages over the years. And thanks too to the Yard staff for tolerating such an influx of visitors and for getting the boats ready for us so speedily.

Philip Bray



Preparing to sail, with *Princess Katherine* awaiting her passengers

(Picture by Jennifer Mack)



Picture by Alison Wakes Miller



Pictures by Jill Donley

Skipped two day sails - May 2010

Both Hustler 3 and Hustler 4 are now booked for our skipped two day sails in May next year so that you can enjoy the Thurne, Bure and a broad or two during a wonderful time of year.

The cost for this event will be £195 per person which includes bed and breakfast.

We will run three consecutive dates:

Saturday May 22nd and Sunday May 23rd

Monday May 24th and Tuesday May 25th

Wednesday May 26th and Thursday May 27th

We already have 10 interested Friends, with five of you booked already so if you would like to join us in May then scrutinize your diaries and ink in two days of exceptional fun and possible adventure(wind dependant)!!

For this first event we are going to use The Swan Hotel in Horning and your skippers for the Hunter's will be Philip Bray and Neil Hopkinson.

Please send me your name and address with your preferred date as well as a reserve date so that I can get a booking form sent out to you. A deposit of £50 will secure a place, with the balance being paid in April.

My contact details are neil@impalaadventures.com and phone numbers are 07930910870, or 01455 203167.

Neil Hopkinson

* * *



Three happy sailors, we... With *Wood Sorrel* at the Autumn picnic.
Picture by Neil Hopkinson



From the Yard Vikki Walker

Hello and welcome to our Yard news...

What a grand year it has been! Our season started off slowly but it soon picked up in June and just got better along with the weather. We think allowing the Wood class boats to be booked for short breaks early worked out very well. Which in turn helped to keep the Hustlers and Lullabys free for weekly hires. Not too many people minded having to wait to book short breaks on them. We hit almost 80% bookings this year and we are 56% booked for next year already! Guess it's true that good weather helps!



Picture by Sue Hines

Publicity wise, the Griff Rhys Jones airing helped us along, with three bookings, a couple of 2-hour sails and even a booking for 2010. We've had a couple of write-ups in the EDP a photo shoot for a clothing catalogue early in the year and a few budding artists taking photos of our girls for some projects they were working on.

As well as our wonderful regular visitors, we've had some from as far away as China, Tasmania, Brazil, Dubai, New Zealand and USA this year. It seems we are really getting

out there now with more world wide acclaim after all. I knew we had it before but recently it seems to have been getting bigtime.

We didn't have too many mishaps this year really, well, maybe two or three, and not that our girls were injured much anyway. They do seem to come off the best in a 'water fight', bless 'em!

However, that said, so much for stainless steel! The new stainless steel rudder on *Lustre* was lost between Horning and Salhouse a couple of weeks before the season ended. We seem to remember one being lost last year too, so Graham says the design will need modifying to make sure it doesn't happen anymore. I can hear us old 'uns saying, "it's not always good to move over to new things now is it!" But I'm told that with just a little bit of modification they will be fine.

The Friends' BBQ was fantastic, the Autumn Event went very well indeed and everyone who came to visit us was happy, so all things being equal, it turned out to be a really nice year and after the previous two years it was very welcomed I must say!

And now... Yep, you guessed it, it's that time of year again, when the ladies get to come indoors, for some well deserved love and attention. The guys have been very busy sorting the ladies out for coming in; they've been drying the sails and awnings, then folding them all ready for storage. For want of a better way of putting it... they get stripped naked! Every bit of the boat gets a



Naked ladies!

good thorough cleaning inside and out, a rub down with some pumice powder and then a jolly good power wash on the outside before being gently manhandled into their working place for the winter months. You know these guys are such pros at it now that they have them all in the sheds, including a few private boats, within three days!

So nope, just because the girls are in the sheds it doesn't mean we are all off for a holiday! Even though we wouldn't mind that of course but the hard work starts now! There will be blood, sweat (and no doubt the odd swear word or three) and tears shed on these 'old gals' over the next five months.

Actually, this is a very interesting time of year when you can see true craftsmanship going on in these here sheds! The boys

really do come into their own with the wonderful work they do to the girls to keep them they way we all like to see them.

This winter *Luna* and *Hustler 4* will be having the extra work done to them. Their decking will be redone with planking and timbers being replaced where needed. We need two new sails, for a *Wood* and a *Hustler*. We also hope to get new awnings for *Wood Rose*, *Wood Sorrel*, *Hustler 4* and *5* for next year too. So as you can see your donations do help us greatly because without your help the Trust would have to pay for all of them ourselves which means we may not have been able to have them all. This very much helps to keep them looking at their best that's for sure.



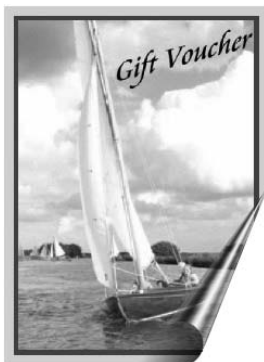
Preparing for being winched in
And finally, we just wanted to let ya'll know that we have been successful in achieving our RYA Accreditation and will now be able to offer RYA training/certificates using our boats. This should help those people who would love to sail them but are afraid too without prior training to be able to train on

them. We hope this will not only keep our girls safer but also bring new people to our Yard both young and old. We will be updating the website with prices etc by the end of November and also the brochure will cover courses, prices etc.

Now on that note, we'd like to say a big thank you for your continued support, for visiting us this season and also for everything you do for 'our girls' and the Yard. We look forward to seeing ya'll again at the end of March. Bye for now ya'll great folks of Hunter's Fleet!! (Sorry I called home last night so the American is coming out of me today...!)

Vikki

Give the Gift with a Difference Hunter's Yard Gift Vouchers



Give the gift of a Two-Hour Skippered Sail
A Half Decker Day Sail
Or General Hire or Hunter Fleet merchandise
Full details on our website:
www.huntersyard.co.uk/gift-vouchers.html

The tale of *Hustler 5* at Acle Bridge

(After the great Scottish poet William McGonagall)

Jem Coady

It was on the 14th of July 2009
As they reached the great road bridge at Acle
The grizzled old helm and his eager young crew
Were very nearly involved in a dreadful debacle.

They had cast off from Somerleyton before the sun had risen
To catch the tide on Breydon Water
And though they had stopped to breakfast below Reedham Bridge
Had sailed for several more hours than they had ought to.

At Stokesby faint flashes seen on the skyline
And a sotto voce tremor of thunder
Provided uneasy intimations
Of the conditions they might fairly soon be under.

Now the windward bank above Acle
Quite often with cruisers is cluttered:
“So surely we’re best to shoot the bridge
And raise sail under way!” were the words they uttered.

So, tied to the reeds on the final bend
’Neath threatening skies the mainsail was rolled,
Gaff jaws removed and bridge crutches secured
As it grew increasingly wet and cold.

With a fresh to moderate breeze abaft
Hustler 5’s course under jib was controlled and steady;
And having shot Haddiscoe viaduct earlier that day
They both felt confident and ready.

But then in less than a second
This complacent state was over:
Confusion and mental disarray
Supplanted aplomb and calm composure.

A lightning strike on the bank abeam
With the smell of brimstone filled the air
While a simultaneous thunder crack
Nearly deafened the unfortunate pair.

The young crewman, as it happened, sat facing away
And had not seen the adjacent lightning
So leapt out of his skin and into the well
At the ear splitting crack so very frightening.

Unnoticed in this sudden mayhem
A squall from behind them had crept
And with bow wave white and straining jib
Towards the massive bridge Hustler 5 leapt!

“To the bows! To the bows!” cried the hoary old helm
To the young crew as he cowered;
In a trice he had the mast ready to drop
But had reckoned without the wind’s violent power:

For no matter how hard he pushed and strained
In its oak tabernacle it stayed:
Held by the wind’s pressure on its after face
With the bridge parapet just metres away.

With a desperate tug from the helm’s skinny arm
On the topping lift, out the mast popped:
And descended towards him with gathering speed
While he wondered how it might be stopped -

For the crew was prevented by the wet, slippery sail
From arresting such powerful momentum kinetic
While the helm stood transfixed ’neath the plummeting spar
Which he found a very powerful emetic.

As they slipped under the great concrete bridge
The mast struck the poor helm with a terrible thump!
Though it seemed as if bones must be broken or crushed
It raised, in fact, neither a bruise nor a lump.

So, chastened by this experience,
They raised mast and hoisted sail
And as they sailed to the haven of Hunter’s Yard
Searched for a moral in this tale:

Late carousing in pubs and then early to rise -
Such debilitating depravity
Is poor preparation for confronting the forces
Of wind, electricity and gravity!

Hunter Merchandise:

T-Shirt:

Child	£ 4.50
Adult	£ 8.00

Polo Shirt:

Child	£12.00
Adult	£13.50

Sweatshirt:

Child	£10.00
Adult	£15.50

Hooded Sweatshirt:

Adult	£27.50
Child	£22.00

Embroidered badge £ 7.50
(10th anniversary logo)

Baseball Cap:

Child	£ 4.25
Adults	£ 5.25

Hunter's Fleet book £7.00

Hunter's Fleet mug £2.75

'Friends' Calendar £7.00

'Heritage Boat-Yard'

DVD £10.00

The Hidden Broads

Hunter's Yard DVD £12.00

Commemorative Embroidered

Badge £7.00

Playing Cards £3.00

Water Bottle £3.00

Writing Pad £3.00

(Clothing sizes - Adult: XL, L, M, S.
Child: 12-13 yrs, 9 -11 yrs, 7-8 yrs, 5-6 yrs.)

Postage and Packing: Gift Vouchers,
Calendars, and DVDs, please add £1.00
All other items, please add £2.50.

The 'Friends' and the 'Trust'

There seems to be some confusion about the difference between the 'Friends of the Hunter Fleet' and the 'Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust'. When Norfolk County Council put the Hunter Fleet up for sale in 1995, a group of concerned people organised a public subscription and a successful bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund. This enabled the *Trust* to be formed as a charity which purchased the Fleet from NCC. The Trust owns the boats and the yard, and employs the staff who run them.

As a result of the public subscription, there was still much interest and good-will expressed towards the Hunter Fleet, so the *Friends* organisation was formed to keep those people informed of progress and to enable them to continue to provide support. The Friends have their own constitution and Committee but their accounts are technically part of the Trust, in order to enjoy the benefits of being a charity. The Trust Chairman, a Trust representative, and the Yard Administrator are all co-opted onto the Friends' Committee, which takes a keen interest in the running of the Fleet. However, it is the Trust which is actually responsible for the Hunter Fleet's management.

Fly the Flag...



Please note that because only Hunter boats are allowed to fly the Hunter flag, which is blue with a plain central red-on-white stripe, the Friends' version, which incorporates the international code flag F, can be flown on member's own yachts or attached to the starboard shrouds by Friends hiring Hunter boats. The pin is the normal hunter flag design. These items are available only to Friends. Orders for all merchandise (with cheque payable to Friends of the Hunter Fleet) to: Hunter's Yard, Horsefen Road, Ludham, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR29 5QG

Printed by Century Printing
132 High Street, Stalham, Norwich
Norfolk NR12 9AZ
Tel/Fax: 01692 582958