

HUNTER'S YARD



Newsletter of the Friends of the Hunter Fleet



The Three-Rivers Race - June 2010
Tim, Ian, and John holding their own
Picture by Philip Bray

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Editorial

Welcome to issue 40 of the newsletter! Who'da thunk it? Issue No. 1 appeared with the launch of the Trust in Autumn 1996, and here we are, 14 years down the line and still going strong. I took over as editor in July 2005 with issue 24, so I think it's fair to say, I'm getting the hang of things.

One of the joys of acting as editor is that I get to meet some very interesting people, either in actuality, or via the words on the page. I recently met our RYA Instructor Jimmy James for instance, when we both attended a quiz night in aid of the wherry, Harthor. (Guess whose team won!)

Also though, I come upon characters I can't meet but long to know more about. For instance, in the Log from 1932, (page 11) there is reference to a 'rat charmer', possibly from Horsey. Oh! The mind fairly boggles, and I would so love to know more about him and his role. If you know anything, or can point me at someone who does, I would be very grateful as I am currently researching for a project on the history of the Happening area, of which Horsey is a part.

Finally, as you will see from the box below, I really have managed to move house. Of course now the fun begins, and the paintbrush, not to mention the garden, beckons. But all in good time. First of all, there is Christmas, and I wish you all a good one, and a prosperous and happy New Year!

Zoë

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The Chair types...

I read recently, that during flood defense works near Ludham, a dugout boat or canoe was discovered, the possible age of which was still a little hazy, but is suggested as something between 1400 and 3000 years old. To me that suggests not only a long tradition of boat building, in the area, but also that Ludham boats are built to last, certainly the team at Hunter's is working hard to live up to that reputation. Percy's lovely ladies are always a delight to my eyes every time we go sailing, and what an additional pleasure it is when we discover that the Hunter's boat we are admiring is helmed or crewed by someone we know.

Earlier in the season we were invited to a barbecue where we met many new friends almost all of whom were very long term users of the lovely ladies. The evening was, frankly super. One young man we met, wearing a Loughborough University shirt, turned out to be connected with the University Sailing and Wind Surfing Club. Back in 1953, when it was known as Loughborough Colleges, I too was connected with that same organization, though in those days wind surfing had not been invented and canoeing was our other activity. Needless to say we had much to talk about and when we met up with the group later, at the Pleasure Boat, it was impressive to see the boat handling displayed and the level of helpfulness and cooperation between crews. Learning that the group originated in scouting reduced the surprise but not the admiration.

Speaking generally, the season started well, once we got over that dreadful AGM

weather. We were blessed with lots of sunshine and good sailing weather. The latter half of the season, however, was characterized by rain, high winds and racing clouds. Sadly the day of the Friends' picnic was just such a day. Admittedly, the rain held off for the actual picnic, but the wind was far too strong for enjoyment. Most Hunter boats had two or even three reefs and still struggled, though I am proud to report that no actual damage was caused. The mooring up was most professionally accomplished under Rodney's guidance and the picnic went with a real swing, most people, like us, so relieved to be safely ashore as to feel slightly euphoric but with a weather eye cocked as the wind rose yet another notch. Graham's advice not to attempt to sail back was welcomed, with relief, by most who were happy to wait for a tow back to the yard. We, in *Sapphire*, waited until the rest of the boats were gone or safely in the capable hands of the yard staff before switching the motor on and following.

I feel that a most hearty vote of thanks is due to all the yard staff, firstly for allowing the sailing to take place, at all, in those conditions, secondly for the advice and help with reefing and thirdly for the fact that they worked like Trojans to sort out and tow back so many boats. They must all have ended the day exhausted but very happy with the slickness and success of what appeared at times to me rather like a second Dunkirk with the spirit to go with it. Well done lads! Thanks to your efforts, the 2010 Friend's Picnic was a roaring success.

The end of the sailing season is now upon

us and we, the Friends, can all kiss the Hunter Fleet goodbye and leave them in the yard's tender care, secure in the knowledge that the craftsmen at the yard will assess and put right all damage and the ravages of time, refurbish and beautify the fleet and that next year, thanks to a very great deal of hard, dedicated work, on their part, Percy Hunter's lovely ladies will again grace the waterways of the Broads in their customary elegance, and continue to give so much pleasure to so many.

Les Gee

October 2010

Membership News

We have had yet another good year for Membership in spite of the continuing economic gloom, with a splendid 74 new Friends to date. The not-such-good news is that, because of the sad loss of several members together with non-renewals, our total stands at 875, which has fallen short of the 900 mark that I had hoped to achieve this year.

I recently had a letter from an "Original Friend", who started his Bankers Order at the outset in 1996, and said that it was high time that he increased the annual amount from the initial £10 p.a. So it occurred to me that others of you who joined way back in the last century, and pay by Bankers Order, may well feel the same way. I hope so! The three Newsletters plus two Social Events per year (even if the weather was not up to standard this year!) offer excellent value. I shall be only too pleased to give you the relevant form or bank information on receipt of a call, email or letter. Incidentally,

Bankers Orders account for over 700 memberships so even a moderate response would make a great difference to us. I must say that the majority of our more recent Friends kindly set up Bankers Orders in excess of the £10 minimum.

As I am sure that you all know by now, it is possible to view the current Newsletter on our website in the Members Section of the Friends' page. The Log-in password from now until this time in 2011 is 'Lucent'; it will then be changed when subscriptions are due again.

It's that time of year again when you will have a subscription reminder from me for 2011 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.

Thank you all for your continuing support and loyalty and also for making it possible for the Membership to grow so impressively.

With my best wishes for Christmas and 2011.

Jennifer Mack

October 2010

Three Generations in *Sundew*

Bruce Ryde-Weller



Three Generations - Alex, William, and Bruce

I started sailing in my teens crewing for a friend racing Fireflies around cans in a gravel pit. I liked the sailing but the competition rules took away some of the pleasure and the scenery wasn't the best. It wasn't until many years later when I was married to Angela and had two children aged 7 and 10 that we had an idea for a holiday afloat. We wanted somewhere safe and easy so hired *Sun Dance 1* - now *Leading Lady* - from Barnes-Brinkcraft - (now NBYCo) for 2 weeks.

We had two hours of tuition on Wroxham Broad - "Come up to the wind slowly, but bear away quickly when the sail flaps," was the helpful advice. The weather was perfect and we sailed on both the northern and southern Broads getting as far as Norwich and also braving Potter Heigham to go to Hickling and Horsey Mere. One lasting memory was running up the Ant on a light breeze and being shocked by the sudden noise made by a duck diving off the bank into the river beside us. We were smitten.

Over the next 20 years we bought a Laser 13 dinghy, in which we cruised in UK and

Europe, sailed 36 footers in the Med and found Hunter's where we have sailed Hustlers, Woods and half deckers in various family groupings.

Last year my daughter, Alex gave birth to William and we were wondering how we would go sailing - Hunters' and nappies not being a good combination.

We decided to hire *Sundew* and also rent a cottage in Ferry Marina, Horning, where the five of us stayed very comfortably. Angela and I collected *Sundew* on the Saturday and sailed in a light Northerly breeze to Horning. We stopped briefly at St Benet's for tea and cake, but decided not to bother calling in at Cockshoot with it being on a lee shore. The last 200 yards in the Marina involved rowing against the wind, but we made it.

Alex, her husband Toby, and William arrived later that night, having been helping to organise their village fair. Next morning we were ready to take to the water. Sailing boats can be noisy and frightening for young children, but the weather was kind and for our first sail we all climbed aboard. William was wearing a very fetching yellow oily as it was a little chilly and was securely strapped to Alex.

With a gentle northerly we sailed up to the Swan and then back for lunch. William seemed happy and at seven months had had his first sail in a Hunter boat. He slept contentedly in the afternoon. Encouraged by the success we decided to go to Hoveton Little Broad for lunch the next day. With the same wind conditions the trip was easy and we were soon enjoying a little

more breeze on the Broad. We dropped the mud weight while we had our lunch and after a couple more laps headed back. This time William took a more active role by helming and trimming the mainsheet. Over the rest of the week we combined some more sailing with other trips; one to Pensthorpe to see the gardens and wildlife and another to the Norwich Aviation Museum.

At the end of the week Angela and I sailed *Sundew* back to the yard, stopping at Thurne mouth for lunch where unfortunately it rained and the ducks

seemed very bold, jumping into the boat, intent on having our sandwiches.

As we tacked up Womack water, Alex, Toby and William were waiting for us on the quay and we tied up, dropped the sails and returned *Sundew* to the yard.

I know William will remember nothing of the holiday, but we have the photos and perhaps in 60 years' time he will write a letter to this magazine, in whatever electronic format is then available saying he has just taken his new grandson on his first sail in a Hunter's boat.

I hope so.

Force 9? Autumn Picnic

Neil Hopkinson

This was my first Autumn Picnic as organiser, though as with all events at Hunter's Yard the team is second to none, with a depth of expertise that would come to the fore as the day and weather tested us.

Heavy rain overnight with a strong wind driving it across Norfolk had left the countryside somewhat damp and battered. On the way to the yard the wind had eased. The sky was full of white cloud, the roads were covered in deep puddles and everywhere, leaves and small twigs lay scattered, somewhat earlier than they would have hoped I am sure.

Running through my mind as we pulled into the yard was, *would we need two or three reefs today or would the wind perhaps become too strong to sail safely, as has happened a couple of times this year here in Norfolk*. I came down on the side of three which was also the consensus of all at the yard.

Pat Bray looked after the allocation for the skippers and crews while Philip and I sorted out the mooring for the *Princess Margaret* which was going to take the non-sailors and return crews up to the picnic. As Friends arrived to take over their boats Graham, Ian and Tim were making sure each of 'Percy's Ladies' was reefed to three.

Rodney Longhurst (*Wood Anemone*) was to be Harbour Master at the picnic site so he was one of the first away. The rest of the fleet were not long after him. The wind was increasing by the minute and I must admit that I did feel a little concerned for the safety of the Friends as today was going to be very difficult to sail in.

By 11.00am, the Hustlers, half deckers and *Lucent* (Philip was taking her onto The Green Boat Show afterwards) had left the yard. It was time for me and my crew (Robin and Ruth) to set sail in *Wood Avens*, leaving the yard under jib alone, hoisting

the main in Womack Water to power away down to the Thurne and in no time at all we were up to Thurne Dyke. On the way we passed *Brown Bess* (Robin and Elizabeth Watts and family) nosed into the reeds getting the sail down in readiness to row across to the mooring. Ahead past the dyke was a scene of some interest - Hunter yachts roaring along, beating back up to the mooring. One or two were blown into the reeds on the lee shore so were awaiting rescue by Graham, Ian , Tim, and Wayne - who had arrived in the Dorys, 'just in case'.

Our own mooring was thwarted by a cruiser getting expertly in the way and as I had scandalised the main too early, we were blown across the river. We thus had to moor on the windward bank of Thurne Dyke so that we could sail off again to moor successfully for lunch on the correct side of the river.

Eventually everyone was moored and settled down to a blustery lunch. The wind

was increasing in strength by the minute it seemed, so a decision was made to take the half deckers and most of the cabin yachts back with the Dorys acting as tugs. As the wind continued to increase under a darkening sky one of the Hustlers that had elected to sail back was struggling so Philip took Ian across so that he could take the helm and sail her back to the yard.

Wood Anemone, *Wood Avens* and a couple of Hustlers sailed back to the yard under their 'own sail' so to speak and I can vouch that the sail back was exhilarating to say the least: On *Wood Avens* we had to spill the wind often and once we were on our beam ends as a squall hit us near the mouth of Womack. Exciting stuff!

The showers were getting more numerous, almost joining together as we entered the yard to moor *Wood Avens* after a successful if slightly windswept picnic.

I suspect that next year we will probably have *no* wind!





From the Yard Vikki Walker

Hello & welcome to the Yard news...

Goodness gracious me - October already! The season has finished and today as I write this the sun shines! Mother Nature you are cruel sometimes (gentlemen I can hear you muttering, just like a woman... Now now! you know the drill, you can't live with us and you can't...)

Both Friends events had unfavourable weather and even high winds; I think only one boat went out at the May event. That was Malcolm and his daring, or should I say 'crazy' crew who did go out sailing that day, and even enjoyed it, or so they said! The BBQ was still a success though.

Then the Autumn event had those high winds yet again. However, that said I think everyone enjoyed the day, as usual. But actually I think the Hunter teams 'rescue' efforts were probably the most enjoyable bits for some folks. It was a good bit of exercise for us all perhaps.

Well, I've put my order in early for blue skies and fair winds for the next Friends event, so crossing everything; it'll be wonderful weather for the next one. We're looking forward to it already!

The bookings for this year were up on both the cabins and half deckers; we finished at 80% and 48%. Thank you to all of you who sailed with us again this year and to all you new hirers too! We just wouldn't be here without you, you know it!

Really though, it was wonderful to see so many of you this year, thank you for your continued support! And to all of you wonderful folks who continue to support us but don't manage a visit, I say 'come on down', it would be fabulous to see y'all. There's no better place than 'messin about on the river'. Come on now, sing the song, you know the words - don't lie, you're not too young.

Not a lotta people know dis but... our boys (Ian, John & Tim) got to race in the Horning Three Rivers Race this year for the first time ever. The wind dropped out a few times, towards the end especially, but they did finish - 69th I think, but at least they finished.

Graham popped down to see them go through Potter bridge and when he came back he was beaming from ear to ear and proudly announced that I should have seen them go through the bridge, they did it perfectly, very slick and professional.



Photo by Martin & Kim Cowley.

A guy called Simon Snell took a video clip of them going through - you might like to take a look if you have internet access. Turn the sound up loud so you can hear the comments and cheers as they go under the bridge. It's on the threeriversrace.org.uk website under Picasa 2010-3rivers-Simon Snell. The link address you need is below. <http://picasaweb.google.co.uk/simongeneral2/20103rivers?feat=email#5480139201437567890>

The 'girls' are being made ready for their winter 'gussying up' time and yes you guessed it, they're naked again, bless 'em. Good job they're in the sheds to keep warmer. I say warmer because it sure in the heavens isn't warm in there by any means but better than outside. The picture below shows the sails drying and some of the doors and floors out for washing with pumice powder before being brought into the sheds.



Graham says that *Wood Sorrel* will have the most work done on her this year with hopes to replace some of the well planks, amongst other things, in *Lustre*. Of course the usual care and loving attention will be bestowed to all of the 'girls' with their 'bits and pieces' being sorted out as Graham says, as and

when. *Lustre* was the first of the 'ole gals' to come in. If you look closely at the picture below you can see her 'bottom' in the doorway of the shed as the next boat is lined up ready to be winched in.



The RYA Training Centre part of our Yard has had a successful year. All of our courses have gone well with all 16 students passing their levels 1 & 2. Well done to our Instructors, Ian Grapes, Tim Frary, Tony Southwood & Jimmy James. Ian & Tim are not only Instructors but have now passed their Senior Instructor course too, as has Jimmy; well done fellas!

Next year Tim will be our Chief Instructor and Tony will be taking his Senior Instructor course soon too, so we will be able to say that all of our instructors here at the Yard are SIs. How good is that?

Changes are afoot at the Yard... As a lot of you know, Graham is due to retire sometime soon and we have been asked by those who know about that, what will be happening. Is he really going or will he be around like Tom has been. Well, sadly, yes he has decided to retire next April. He's looking forward to having Saturdays off and spending time at home and being a Granddad. Ian will be taking his place

though and Graham says he's only a phone call away should he need any help. Graham also jokingly said he would put his name down for some of our 2-hour skippered sails... and guess what, joking apart I'll be calling him to do some of those next year for sure!

Our apprentice Ashley Durrant has now finished his two year apprenticeship with us. I think he enjoyed his time with us and the two years certainly did go by quickly.

And lastly... believe it or not, Tom says he REALLY is retiring at the end of this month (October)! He also says he's only down the road if we need him for anything.

Back in August Bill Jones had a BBQ here at the Yard and I took the photo below of our three guys together. (Ian, where's your

Hunter hat man?! Slapped legs needed young'un!)

Finally, we'd like to say thank you to all of you for your generosity again this year. We really just couldn't do it as nicely without your help. Your donations have helped us to buy new awnings, the new instructional DVD we send out to all our hirers, materials for making new quants, self activating life jackets and a new reconditioned sewing machine for sail repairs, to name but a few items. It all helps to keep Percy's 'Lovely Ladies' looking their best for everyone to enjoy.

So until next time...

Vikki



Sailing Logs of JP (Pat) Bray

Friends who have been with us for a while will remember that we featured some of the 1930s logs of Philip Bray's half brother, Pat in an earlier edition. Here, we reproduce a report from 1932, featuring a group of young sailors. The report offers a fascinating and often funny glimpse of the time.

Log of the Yachts

"Lullaby" and "Lustre"

(written on the "Lullaby")

(P. Hunter & Sons. Womack.)

Sat: July 16th - Sat: July 23rd 1932

Crews.

"Lullaby"

"Lustre"

Smart A. (Alan) Thompson NG (Neville)

Smart B. (Bryan) Croome E.J. (Eric)

Crane J.R. (Ducky) Brett D.M. (Moony)

Bray J.P. (Pat) Harley H.A. (Shrimp)

B.Scott J.P. (Pat)

Sat: July 16th

The crew arrived from various places at various times. Pat was on the spot having travelled down the night before. Moony arrived at 11.0 am from Wroxham with his father and shortly after 1.30 the Smart brothers were brought along in a friend's car from Potter Heigham. The remainder of the crews arrived about 3.30 in two cars from London.

We stowed our things away on board and prepared to set sail. We left Hunter's yard at 4.0 pm with a light following wind and made for the main river. On the way Alan stood on the cabin top in order to reach the topping lift and slacken it. He pulled in the boom a little so that he could

reach it but unfortunately the boom didn't stop but went across and coaxed Alan over the side before he could avoid it. Thus was registered the first of our seven "fall ins". It took a little while to untie the painter of the dinghy as there was a knot jammed in the rope, but we managed to untie the dinghy and collected Alan from the water.

There was a fair breeze down to Potter where we lay up at Wood's yard near the exit from his motor boat yard. We were a little in the way so as soon as ail was lowered we pushed the boat across to the lee bank. We lowered the mast and pushed through the bridges. On the other side we laid up to wait for the others and to do a little shopping at the greatly enlarge Bridge Stores, now under new management.

We got away about 5.30 and sailed up the Thurne to the mouth of Kendal Dyke near which we laid up for the night. The boats were prepared for the night and dinner was cooked. The meal was served at 8.0 pm.

cold mutton

green peas, potatoes, chutney

fresh raspberries & tinned milk

coffee & biscuits

After dinner we cleared away, sat about and chatted or went for a row in the dinghies. The "Lullaby" had what is known as a pram, that is a small boat with blunt bows and the ability to turn right round very quickly. It sits very lightly on the water and in consequence, it is very easy to fall in to the water when entering or leaving the pram.

Bed was reached about 11.0 pm.
 Sunday. We were up soon after 8.0 am but didn't bathe as the wind was very cold and, to our joy from the sailing point of view, strong. Breakfast was served at 9.0 am.

<u>Breakfast. Sunday 17th. Nr Kendal Dyke</u>
Post Toasties fried eggs, bacon, potatoes bread, butter marmalade tea

After breakfast we cleared and prepared the boat for sailing. The wind was very strong so we decided to put in one reef and while engaged in this operation, Mr & Mrs Bray arrived in the half-decker "Woodcut" with one or two letters for our crew. Hunter had said the wind was nearly strong enough for two reefs. Both boats were reefed and set sail at 11.15 am for Hickling or Horsey. Up the first narrow section of Kendal Dyke there was a dead head wind and the "Lullaby" managed to get along this reach without mishap. Unfortunately the "Lustre" bumped the bank while tacking and all her way was lost and it took more than twenty minutes to get her up the reach by pushing. The "Lullaby" went on and laid up near to old Vincents eel hut on the Heigham Sounds, where they had biscuits and cake. The wind was a little stronger by now and the "Woodruff" another Hunter boat of 24' stopped nearby to put in a second reef. The "Lustre" did not come so the "Lullaby" set the foresail and went back to meet it. Half way along the "Lustre" was met and it was decided to make for Horsey. The mainsail was hoisted and away we went. The wind was beam up meadow dyke so

we soon reached the hard bank near the entrance to Horsey Mere just as a very heavy shower started. We stopped about 2.0 pm and had lunch while it rained.

<u>Lunch. Sunday 17th. Nr Horsey Mere</u>
Bread, butter, jam biscuits coffee

The rain topped later so we quanted the boats on to the Broad with the intention of pushing across to Waxham Dyke and from there going to the sea for a bathe. The first boat, the "Lullaby", found the wind too strong to quant against and threw two weights over the bow to prevent the boat drifting into the reeds. Unfortunately they wouldn't hold and we slowly drifted into the reeds. We realised that nothing could be done until the wind eased up so we put the cabin top up and prepared to wait till sunset. We had another sharp storm and then rowed about in the pram. It was soon time to prepare the food for the evening which was served at 7.30 pm.

<u>Dinner. Sunday 17th. Nr Horsey Mere</u>
(ie. in the reeds) Cold mutton and ham Heinz beans, potatoes tinned pears & milk coffee & biscuits

After we had cleared up the wind eased up a lot and with one or two good pushes on the quant poles we had the boat off the reeds and so pushed her round to the "Lustre" at the entrance to the Broad. When we were laid up Ducky and Pat went for a row in the pram both using a pair of oars.

They got up a good speed but unfortunately every stroke they took the boat went down at the “least blunt” end and shipped a lot of water until there was about four inches of water in the bottom. Pat got out, the water rushed to Ducky's end of the boat and he found he was sitting in the water. Ducky then changed his trousers and with Pat and Alan aboard rowed across the Broad to the staithe. At the Horsey pub we heard an old yokel telling his friend how a certain house had been freed from rats by employing the services of a rat charmer. We got back safely, having had a short storm in the middle of the Broad, chatted for a while on the “Lustre” and then went to bed. Monday. Up at 8.30 am, one or two people had a dip. Breakfast was served at 9.30 am.

Breakfast. Monday 18th. Nr Horsey Mere

Post Toasties
fried eggs, bacon, potatoes
bread, butter marmalade
tea

The wind was stronger than the previous day and we decided to put in a second reef. We did this and got away about 11.30 for a sail on the Broad. There was a strong wind and a fair amount of sun. The boats were sailing gloriously even with two reefs and we stayed on the Broad going up & down each having turns at the helm until 2 pm when we lay up near the entrance for lunch.

Lunch. Monday 18th. Nr Horsey Mere

bread, butter jam
apricots, Post Toasties & milk
biscuits

As we had a following wind down Meadow Dyke we set sail under the foresail only for safety but we found that the banks kept off a lot of wind so we hoisted the mainsail. We were soon crossing the Heigham Sounds and running down Kendal Dyke towards the Thurne. Along the river to Potter we had a beam wind. We stopped long enough to lower the sails and mast and then pushed through the bridge to Woods' yard where we laid up and went off to the Bridge Stores for provisions.

While laid up we had a cake tea.

<p><u>Tea. Monday 18th. Potter Heigham</u> Tea</p>
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We set sail at 5.0 pm, under the foresail and hoisted the mainsail while under way. Passing Willow Cottage, Pat was cast off in the pram to buy some raspberries and cream for supper. The “Lullaby” came back and Ducky very nearly fell in while trying to take hold of the pram.

We sailed on to the ruined mill just beyond the turning to Womack and laid up for the night. After dinner had been put on the stoves, we bathed and rowed up and down in the pram and were very hungry when dinner was served at 8.0.

And there we must leave them for now... more next time.

(Please note, spellings are as in the original.)

Right on Course

Sam Bryan

Diligent readers of the Friends newsletter will already know that Hunters have started to run some RYA courses this year. As I was a Pupil (read 'Duffer') on one of the first of these, I thought I would provide some feedback to those who might be interested.

Prior to attending the course, my 'experience' comprised holidays three years running, sailing in blissful ignorance (read 'alcoholic haze'). There followed a blank of 50 years not, I stress, due to the demon drink. Last year, I took a two-hour skippered sail with Hunter's and in May of this year had a 2-day sail with the Friends.

The course was run over five full days and was designed to cover RYA requirements for Stages 1 and 2 (Deep Keels). Those interested can consult the RYA website* for detailed content but overall, Hunter's covered the material in greater depth than specified. In addition, material was added to give a more rounded appreciation of Broads' sailing. A total of seven Pupils ranged in age from teens to totterers (that's me).

Three Instructors were permanently on hand with a fourth riding 'shotgun' in the Safety Boat. I thought this a very favourable Instructor to Pupil ratio. The half-deckers used for instruction were *Buff Tip*, *Sundew*, and *Rebel Reveller*, each carrying an Instructor and two, two, and three Pupils respectively.

In the main, the weather was very kind and I would guess we spent no more than 10% of the time in the Classroom. When days started wet, the time was used for theory work. Explanations, along with diagrams were used, these being followed by Q&A sessions. Clear photocopied notes were provided to back up the more weighty topics. Each day's sailing exercises were outlined in the classroom and then demonstrated by the Instructors when on the water. Pupils were then expected to execute the same manoeuvre at least once under guidance.

The week started with a set Instructor and crew to each yacht. This was then varied so that each Pupil sailed in another boat and crew with a different Instructor for at least half a day. I felt this zeroed us in to differences between boats and Instructor approach.

Lunchtimes were spent on the bank with our own provisions. Pupils discussed the doings to date; Instructors conferred as to each boat crew's progress. As the week unfolded, the new material was based increasingly on work already covered; each Pupil was expected to sail with the minimum of Instructor intervention, the remaining crew in each case supplementing their helmsman's actions.

The final two days were spent with a fixed crew and Instructor to a set boat. This engendered a feeling of teamwork within boats and produced a spirit of friendly rivalry between crews. The Instructors were just right; all being keen to impart their subject

clearly and with enthusiasm, whilst supplementing with material drawn from their own knowledge and experience.

I'm sure there must have been occasions whilst I was at the helm when the Instructor was wondering how I could be so dull - strongly resisting the temptation to intervene with a real 'Man overboard' incident. Not So! All was calm and patience. Only on one occasion was the voice raised in my direction and immediately afterwards I was told it was a need to impart urgency rather than an expression of irritation.

So! Well done to those who did so much to structure and present the course, also to

the Pupils, all of whom passed. Many thanks to the Instructors for their patience and encouragement. Also due for thanks are those who provided input on admin, maintenance etc. At the end of the last day we all had an opportunity to express our views by way of a Feedback form. Each Pupil was spoken to in confidence, regarding any points of weakness noted. During the week everyone reflected the enthusiasm imparted by the Instructors and it was 'Thumbs Up' all round; everyone thinking the Course was right on course. Can't wait for the next opportunity to sail in one of these lovely boats.

* <http://www.rya.org.uk>

After the Course was Over (Or, then he woke up...)

I've been taught some nautical stuff
hence I now know a leach from a luff.

I admit that my studies were fraught
but by Hunter's, exceeding well taught.

When discussing a gybe or a jib
I am able, offhand, to ad-lib.

Second nature now port, ditto starboard
clear on beam, but still hazy on larboard.

When close hauling I'm classified fine
I tack once, where some others need nine.

I'm familiar with shackles and knots
but know naught of nautical plots.

I've studied weather, via the Net
but I can't say I've mastered it yet.

I see my skipper looks stern
so it's time to bow out and return
from my dreaming afloat on that dream Hunter's boat,
I've to clean out the Head... It's my turn.

Sam Bryan

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Hunter Fleet Calendar

2011

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