



Tom Grapes 1929-2024



With great sadness, we announce the death of Tom Grapes, a true part of Hunter's Yard and Broads history, who worked at the Yard for more than 60 years.

Tom was born in Fleggburgh on 3 November 1929 and a year later the family moved to Ludham where his father worked as a gardener at The Grange. His grandfather was a thatcher and his great grandfather ran the last wherryman's pub at St Benet's. He went to schools in Ludham and Stalham until he was 16 when he went to work as a gardener/odd job man in the village.

He told a wonderful wartime story of he and friends finding a radio transmitter hidden at St Benet's Abbey which resulted in two German spies being arrested at Wroxham.

At 17 he joined the Royal Marines and trained at Deal and Lympstone before being medically discharged. He returned to Ludham and went looking for a job at Hunter's Yard. There, he met Stanley (Percy's younger son) who offered him a job on the understanding that he also joined the Ludham volunteer fire brigade. He did all sorts of jobs, learnt his varnishing skills from Stanley and helped Cyril with boatbuilding, including building Wood Anemone. His day was 8.15 am to 5 pm for £5 per week.

He married Edna in 1952 and had two sons, Graham and Ian. He took his family on camping holidays and later upgraded to a camper van. Edna died young in 1976, and in 1992 he married Pam, who pre-deceased him.

When the boat yard was sold to Norfolk County Council he continued and became a council employee.

He did any job that needed to be done, including all the signwriting on the yachts, until he retired in October 1984. But he couldn't keep away and came back to help for two days week for NCC and then the Trust. He retired again in October 2010 after 63½ years working at Hunter's Yard but still frequently visited.

He always enjoyed chatting to customers and to Friends at their events. He could be seen on most Saturdays going round the boats sitting in a dinghy and touching up the varnish.

He died on 30 October and is survived by his brother, sister, two sons and four grandchildren.



The legacy lives on...

Ian, Tom's son, keep the Grapes name fully involved with the Yard as Foreman and former Senior RYA Instructor.

Together with Ezra, Guy and Andy, the fleet is in highly skilled and caring hands, keeping them in wonderful condition despite the attentions of some our clients and others on the water.

Each year, according to Percy Hunter's original directions, the boats are 'out of the water by the end of the third week of October', being brought in using traditional slipway methods and meticulously arranged in the sheds with little room to spare. We can recommend that you have a look at the video on YouTube which shows how the boats are launched; it's fascinating (<https://t.ly/n3-9F>)

Everything that is removable is taken out of the boats and they are stripped of all rigging before they are taken out for the winter and never-ending maintenance. Gas cookers are serviced, rigging checked, hulls sanded and varnished, electric motors serviced and everything carefully checked. On top of the general maintenance, small repairs and general tidy-



ing, some major repairs have to be undertaken and two or three have completely new cabin cavasses and roll-up screens made from scratch, using a sewing machine, canvas and a lot of time. To fit them, much trim has to be removed and replaced, along with dozens of screws and then replaced and varnished.



When Linoleum deck covering is replaced, (and yes, it is genuine old-fashioned Lino!) the wooden rails have to be removed and replaced. The new lino is fitted and then they are screwed back on and each screw hole is filled with a small wood plug which is glued in and sanded to the correct profile. For the small yachts, that's about 280 screws and 280 plugs. For the four-berths, about 400 of each. For those young enough to not know of 'lino' it is a



highly durable floor covering made from materials such as solidified linseed oil, pine resin, ground cork dust, sawdust, and mineral fillers, commonly on a canvas backing.





The reason that the boats are in such a wonderful state of preservation is down to the hard and skilled work of our Yard boat-building team, working in the unheated sheds which are sometimes flooded.



The results speak for themselves, a unique fleet of beautiful yachts that Percy Hunter would continue to be proud of.



We're not sparing the photographs in this edition as we want to show off the yard in winter.

Visitors are still welcome of course (though it might be helpful to ring ahead) and check the tides as you might need your wellies!

Not only are all the yachts tucked up, so are all the half-deckers and dinghies.

The sheds are busy, fascinating and if we were to show the images in black and white, virtually unchanged in all the time they have been in use.

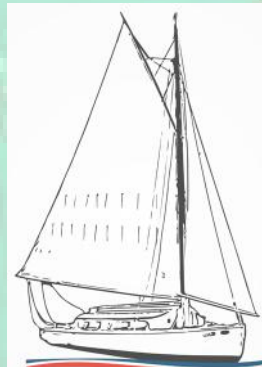
It is part of what makes the Hunter fleet so special, living history but firmly committed to sailing proudly into the future.



We would love to hear from you.



Share the journey with us. Find us on Youtube, Facebook, think about joining the Friends Association, share your memories or offer suggestions.

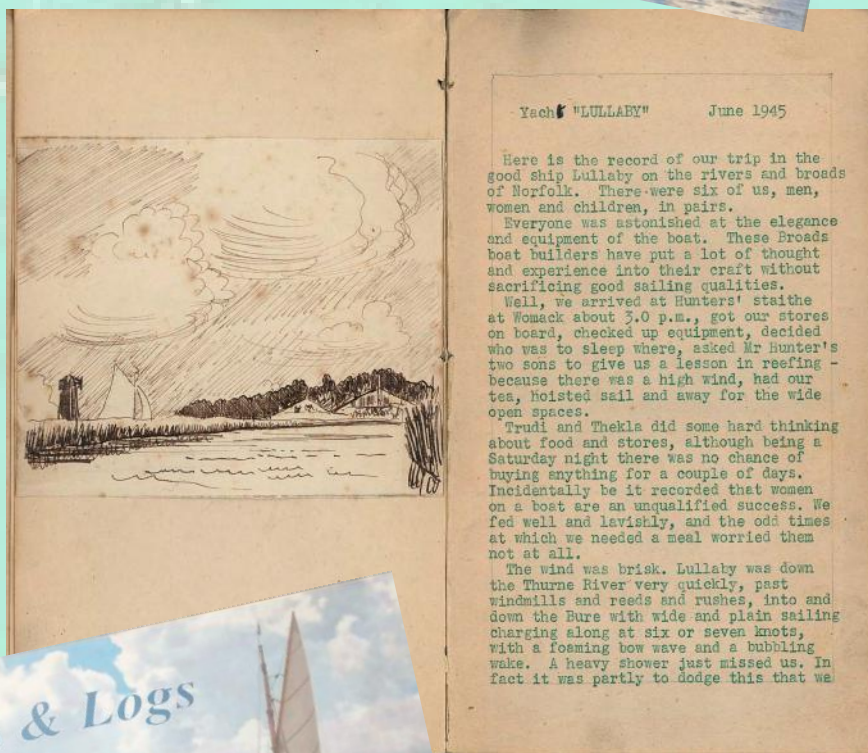
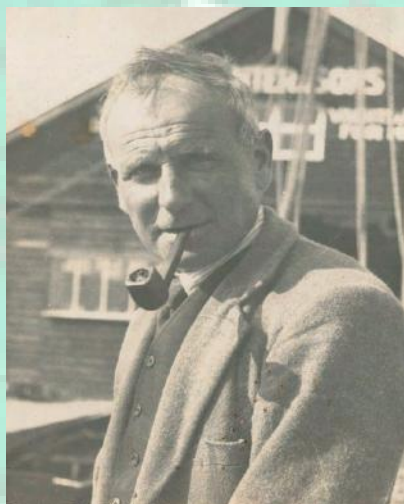


HUNTER'S YARD

Lines & Logs - a bit of history - Our bestseller in 2024! Lines & Logs is a record of the yachts of Hunter's Yard together with vintage accounts of holidays taken on them over the years.



Contents include an introduction by famous yacht designer Andrew Wolstenholm, a short history of the Hunter family, fantastic vintage



extracts from the Blake's 1939 Holiday Brochure, lines and offsets for each class, holiday logs from 1933 to 1981 and much more.

It is packed with wonderful and evocative photographs across the years, personal logs of voyages and sketches of Broads sights and wildlife.

Beautifully produced, and priced at just £15 including p&p, this is an excellent gift (to yourself, perhaps)

as a memento of a holiday taken or to come.

You can order on the web-site or just telephone the office.

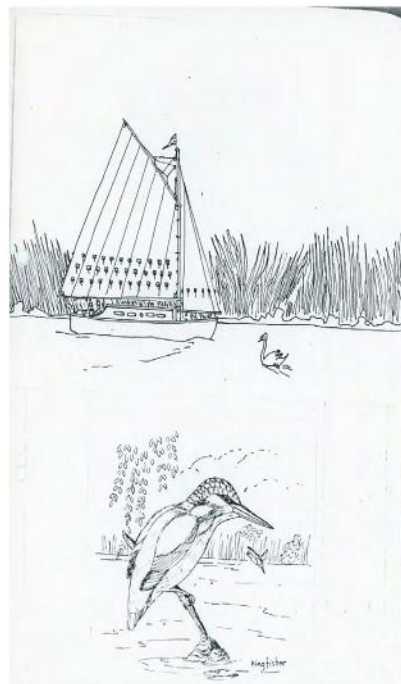


September 28: Bridges and Blackberries: Very windy. Barometer drops 1/4 inch overnight.

Up at dawn (7 AM) Breakfast of fried eggs, bread, at mooring. Go for a sail in company of red-sailed gunter dinghy, sailed by Brown Boats, old wherry, green ketch, Waveney. Sail back and pick up mooring nicely. Martin and Sandy row to town for water and bread (pie & tarts) Low tide reported to be at 8:30 AM tomorrow so plan to sail through Yarmouth then. Set full sail for Burgh Castle. Martin skippers, beat into Oulton Dyke, broad reach down dyke-in gusts,



boat develops excessive weather helm, so we round up to reef main fully. Sail on to pass a Bermudan-rig motorboat (we on a broad reach) At St Olaves, tie up to dolphin, lower main &



HUNTER'S YARD



**Boatyard
sign**



The sign under the eaves at the end of the shed facing the dyke has been repainted by signwriter Nick Harvey. Nick deliberately chose an older style in keeping with the history of the yard. You can see the original lettering in the accompanying photograph - inevitably some visitors have expressed a desire to have the original lettering re-instated. We were a bit torn about this, but decided to go with Nick's replacement. As with the renovation of Notre Dame, we haven't done anything that can't be undone in the future!

The sign facing the car park will be renewed next year.

Hickling Broad Village Regatta

Billed as the friendliest regatta on the Broads, this weekend event takes place each year in early August. This year, Hunter's Yard's own Guy Thrower took one of the yard boats to the regatta (see picture) and had a thoroughly good time. Open to all, the village regatta makes a great way for the visitor to meet local sailors. Arriving in a Hunter's boat, you can be sure of a warm welcome.



Special offers for 2025

Family sailing offer

20% off in July and August. If you have at least one under 18 year old sailing with you, you qualify for this offer. Specially designed to keep the younger generation sailing, this is the second year we have run this offer. School holidays can also be the expensive. Sailing a Hunter's yacht is very good value and we hope this offer makes it even more so.

*'This is what growing up is all about.
Fantastic experience they will not forget.'*

'Help galore from a knowledgeable, friendly team.'

'We loved our whole experience and will be back.'

Use the 'family' coupon when booking.



HUNTER'S YARD

Under 25s sailing offer

Through the whole season, under 25s get 20% off normal rates. But all crew need to be under 25!

Use the 'Under 25s' coupon when booking



Last season we had a group of young people hire three boats who, now in their late teens and early twenties, had been sailing from Hunter's with their parents for many years. It was delightful welcoming them back as a new generation of skippers.

So, if you have friends or family who qualify and want a break from work or uni, let them know that they can have a super, great value, holiday on the Broads.

Lustre- DofE damage

Fairly extensive work is taking place on Lustre. That is Guy wielding the chisel in the photo. This is what happens when you let schools take the boats out for their Duke of Edinburgh award. We always hold our breath waiting to see the damage following a DofE outing - but what better way to learn sailing than on boats that are forgiving and that can be repaired. Actually, not is all as it seems in the photograph. The top plank was due for replacement - the lower plank was damaged by the expeditioners but we managed to fill it temporarily to see Lustre through the rest of the season.



On the opposite side, Ian replaced a plank while Lustre was still in the water (Master boatbuilding for you!) on a Saturday afternoon.



A small Christmas appeal

Donations are critically important to keeping the fleet going and to enabling the Trust to take children out sailing. In 2024, over 600 children and teenagers came sailing with the Trust. For most of these young people, this was their first experience of the Broads and sailing. Some came for just a few hours and others for nearly a week. These activities were made possible by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and a number of local charities - Alan Boswell, Norwich Freeman's, the Anguish Foundation and the Ranworth Trust.



If you are able to make a small donation this Christmas season, it will go towards keeping young people sailing during 2025.

To make a donation, just go to the website where you'll be able to make a donation through KindLink or by BACS. Thank you in advance for all your help - it is hugely appreciated.

[Click here to donate or find out more about donations, legacies and codicil pledges.](#)



1970

Noelle McCormack kindly sent these family photos. The photo full of youngsters was taken around 1970 by Noelle's father Joe. The family had hired Woodruff and Wood Sorrel, with girls in one boat and boys in the other.

The other photograph, taken around 1971 by Noelle's brother Simon, shows them quanting (no electric motors in those days) under Potter Heigham bridge towing a sailing dinghy.

Noelle writes:

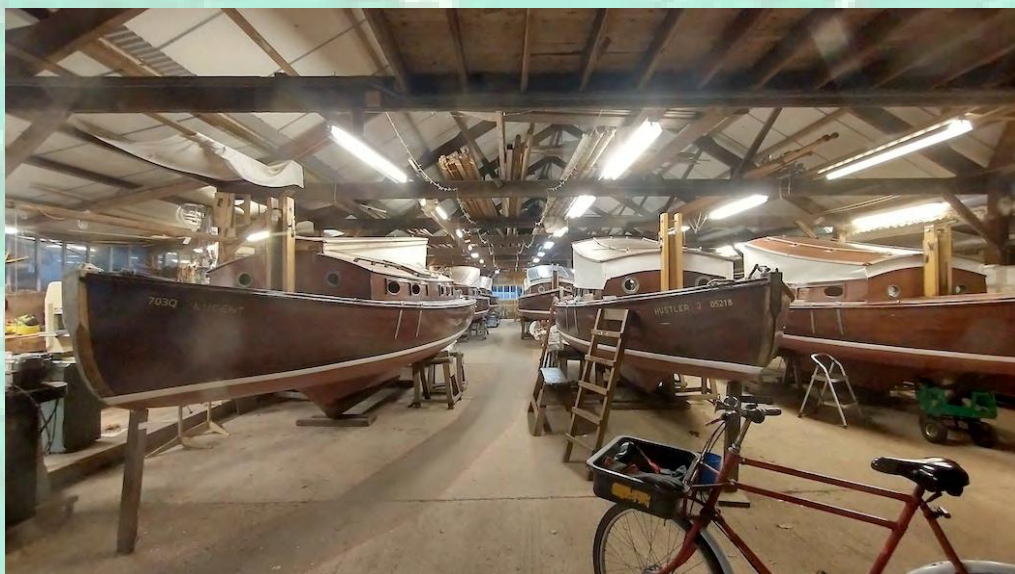
'We still go to the Broads every year and stay in bungalows on the Thurne River at Martham and get very excited seeing the Hunter boats sailing by. We are all old(ish) now and have been coming to the Broads for family holidays since the mid 1960s!'



HUNTER'S YARD

Donations and Legacies

Not everyone knows Hunter's Yard is part of the Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust, a charity set up in 1995. The mission of the charity is to maintain the boats and yard and use them for educational purposes. All our income goes to fulfil these two aims.



This year we will have introduced over 600 young people to sailing on the Norfolk Broads. These are largely young people who might not otherwise get to know the Broads, let alone a sailing boat. We hope that some of them, with our help, will develop a lifelong passion for sailing.

Every penny counts and plays a critical role in keeping the boats and yard going and, really importantly, getting young people out sailing.

If you would like to make a donation our bank details are:

The Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust -
Sort code: 60 07 47
Account: 67098614

Please put 'donation' in the reference field. And, if you feel able, do let us know you have made a donation; we would like to send you a word of thanks.

[Click here to donate or find out more about donations, legacies and codicil pledges.](#)

<https://nhftrust.org.uk/>

Skippers wanted - volunteers

Being able to offer a 2hr sail through the season for visitors is a really important part of what the yard does. We always need volunteer skippers to help us out on these sails. In return, you are welcome to use the boats at quiet booking times. Our regular skippers find these sails quite good fun, often meet interesting people and get great delight in introducing potential sailors to the joys of the Broads. If you are local and have the time, do let us know as we would be pleased to put you on the roster.

Skippers wanted - paid

We are looking for paid skippers to help out with our youth sailing programme and RYA courses. Our youth expeditions last from a couple of hours up to a week. RYA courses are usually a week long and we also do introduction to cabin boats for hirers where we skipper them during the day with some informal tuition, leave them moored up at night and return next morning. You meet great people, get out on the water and can have a lot of fun. If you would like to be put on the skipper roster, do get in touch - we would love to hear from you!



Gift cards

Remember that a Hunter's Yard gift voucher makes the perfect gift. We will shortly be able to send you an e-version or an old-fashioned but elegant card. We are just having new cards made so look out for the designs which will go up on the website in due course.

[Click here for more information and to order your gift.](#)

Do you love coming to Hunter's Yard?

Become a Friend.

There are over 900 Friends and they play a vital role in supporting the yard and the Trust. Local Friends help out at the yard through the season, getting the yard ready in the Spring and putting it to bed in the Autumn. Currently the Friends are scoping out some landscaping as you approach the sheds from the car park; this will hide the bins and make the area more welcoming.



There are regular newsletters and two Friends' gatherings at the yard each year with skippered sailing laid on, barbecues and refreshments. These are very convivial events. Friends also get special rates on the cabin yachts in Friends week and, for older Friends who perhaps aren't able to get out on their own anymore, there is a week-long skippered sail in the season.

We welcome all those who have an interest in supporting the fleet and Friends contributions all go to support Trust projects at the yard such as the installation of electric motors, or providing skippers for various educational or other sailing activities. The Friends Association donates more money each year to the Trust than it takes in subscriptions, through skippered sails, and events and donations.

<https://friends.huntersyard.co.uk/>

Special booking access for Friends

If you are a Friend, you have special access to the half deckers at short notice and at a special Friend's rate. So, if the weather is looking good on Friday afternoon and you suddenly fancy booking a boat for the evening or the weekend just give us a ring and we'll see what is available.

If you feel you would like to support the Trust by becoming a Friend, please visit us at;

<https://friends.huntersyard.co.uk/>



If only we could bottle it..... Many would say that there is something extraordinary about Hunter's Yard and its fleet, something that moves them, something intangible but real.

Is this author being whimsical or is there something special? I like to think so.

I first visited the yard way back in 1968, very shortly after it was taken over by the Norfolk County Council and sailed various boats few times as a young teenager.

On one occasion, when I was sixteen, we took out the three four berthers with Air Cadets for several days in the (very cold) spring. I skippered one boat, my friend John, another and the third in the very capable hands of an experienced sailor and teacher.

Why tell you this? Well, it was more than fifty years before I entered the yard again, a couple of years ago, for the Friends' autumn event. I was genuinely moved as I walked in, seeing it almost the same, (though perhaps a little tidier).

What is it? The history? The story? The unchanging nature of the yard and the fleet?

I think it is all these wrapped up in a package that is unique and represents something that people of all ages perhaps seek to a greater or lesser extent; a simple approach to life, cutting ties with the demands of everyday existence. Just for short time, living life in a 'black and white' kind of way. There is an increasing group that wants simplicity, reduced reliance on technology in their leisure time, a lower carbon impact and to feel a direct connection with their activities, such as fixed gear cycling, wall-climbing, hiking, wild camping, board games, escape rooms and environmentalism. An increasing number of young people are enjoying visits and sailing each year, hopefully, taking away the pleasure of 'slow', teamwork and responsibility.

The Hunter's Yard fleet can provide this simplicity. No frills, no luxury, in fact not much of anything, just water, wind and wood. You could call it 'waterborne camping', or 'sailing into history', stepping out of time into a direct connection with the environment and nature.

When drivers talk about cars, they often refer to the joy of 'feel' and 'feedback' in cars devoid of power steering, active suspension, power brakes and the like.

Sailing one of Percy's boats reflects this. Every aspect of the experience is 'real'; the wake under the bow vibrating through the hull, the pressure on the tiller and sheets and the gurgle of the water when you catch the wind.

If you put a new Ferrari and an old open-top 1930s Bentley at the side of the road, you know which one nearly everyone will be admiring most. In the same way, Norfolk Broads classic sailing craft draw admiring and envious appreciation as they make their way.

These boats were not 'made', pulled out of a mould or made from a kit of parts, they were created, from assorted bits of wood that were cut, planed, steamed, bent and persuaded into place to create the lovely lines, by many skilled hands.



Does part of the boatbuilder end up in each boat? Does the connection people feel with these boats stretch back through the decades to the first hands that touched them?

The very essence of the yard and fleet is an unchanging commitment to the preservation of this unique survivor of an age long past, but still available to experience, virtually unchanged.

'Step on board and sail into history' sums it up. (Thoughts from Whimsical of Womack)

Thanking our supporters

We would like to take this opportunity thank our supporters:



LAMB SIGNS, NORWICH For kindly providing a splendid new sign for the entrance to the Yard which explains the role of the Trust to visitors.



EASY BATHROOMS, NORWICH, For donating materials which allowed us to install splashbacks in the bathrooms and kitchen area



Kirk Brown for donating two custom-made double glazed units for the soon to be reinstated display unit to the left of the front door of the shed.

This will display notices, merchandise and information about the Friends Association, the Trust, donating and volunteering.



For all fans of Coot Club and The Big Six by Arthur Ransome

A guide to locations featured in the books

Two of Arthur Ransome's best loved books Coot Club and The Big Six were set on the Norfolk Broads. They were immortalised in the 1984 films which are still available today and which feature Hunter's Yard, home to the Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust.

You'll find a small museum at the Yard during the sailing season dedicated to Arthur Ransome where you can see some of the boats from the films (including Swallow and Amazon from the 1974 film; you can hire these to sail).

We have compiled a small guide to locations featured in the books which you can visit by boat (and some of them on foot).

The River Bure - Acle Bridge to Horning and a bit beyond!

Leaving Hunter's Yard and sailing down Womack Water turn to starboard (right) and sail down the river Thurne towards Thurne Mouth where it joins the river Bure.

PLEASE NOTE : The Broads are tidal and if the winds are light you will really benefit from having the tide flowing with you on the Bure. It really matters once you get in among the trees after the entrance to Ranworth broad.

On the way down to Thurne Mouth you will sail past Thurne Mill, a large white painted windmill. There are two things to note about Thurne Mill:

Firstly, and most importantly, it has been restored to working order and so the fantail (the small circular wheel at the back of the top) turns the cap of the mill into the wind and that means that the sails are always facing into the wind. Very useful to us sailors !

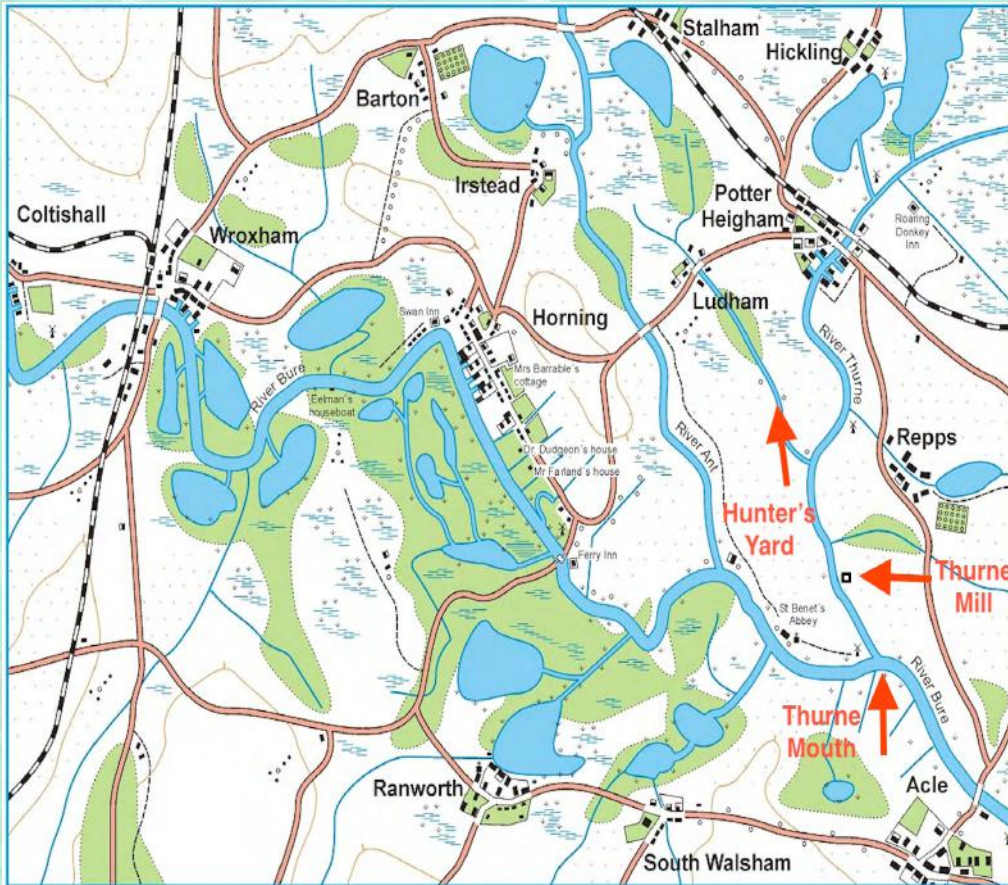
Secondly most windmills around the Broads were built to lift water from the dykes which drained the fields into the rivers. Broads' 'windmills' are actually called windpumps!

When you reach Thurne mouth you have a choice, turn to starboard and sail up the River Bure towards Ranworth and Horning or carry straight on down the River Bure to Acle Bridge. Acle bridge is where the stomach-ache boy missed the Margoletta coming back. He used his 4d telephone money (four pence in very old money) to buy bananas and had to spend a day in bed! You may need to find someone who can explain why anyone needed 4p for the telephone long ago, they may even tell you about 'pressing button 'B' to get your money back !

Back to the sailing the river down towards Acle is wide and open, no trees to take your wind, so if you have time it is a really fun sail.



As you sail up the Bure towards Horning you will go through the big Bure bends which will test your sailing skills to use the wind to the very best advantage. Next comes St. Benet's Abbey - this is just a ruin now. The cross is where the altar was in the church and the windmill is built into the walls of the abbey gatehouse. Sail on past Ant Mouth which leads to Barton Broad where tradition has it that Nelson learnt to sail because his uncle was the vicar of Barton, and then you come to the bend where Teasel was moored. This is where the motor boat brought Dick and Dorotea with Mrs. Barrable after their trip down river from Wroxham (Coot Club, ch2. 'Disappointment'). Shortly after that you will come to the long dyke which leads to Ranworth Broad where



Tom and the Twins, Port & Starboard, took Teasel so that they could teach Dick and Dorothea to sail. In Coot Club they don't go and moor at the staithe but in a bay just as they arrive on the broad. In The Big Six the Death & Glories moor at Ranworth staithe for the night and wake up to find boats cast off from the dyke (The Big Six, ch12, 'Worse and Worse')

After you have sailed on Ranworth (actually, it is really Malthouse broad but everyone calls it Ranworth!) it's back down the dyke to the river Bure, turn to port and head for Horning. You will pass Horning church and then on towards

where No7 had their nest, just by a little mooring dyke which leads to Cockshoot Broad. You will find all these places on the map of the River Bure in Coot Club (Page 103 of my very old copy, if you have a newer book the page number may be different).

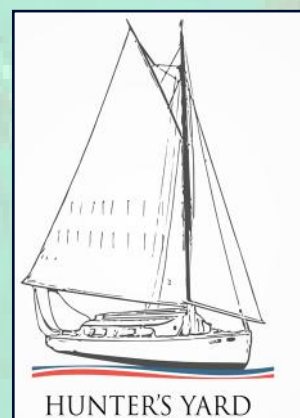
As you sail into Horning you will find it almost impossible to work out exactly where The Wilderness was in The Big Six and, try as hard as you can, you won't find Dr. Dudgeon's house or the Coot Club Dyke. You can try, you can make a really good guess, but over the years since Arthur Ransome wrote the stories things have changed.

Horning Staithe still looks very much like the illustration in chapter eighty-eight of The Coot Club and the Swan Inn is still there. You will see Horning sailing club which runs races for sailing boats like Mr. Farland's Splash. The little drawing right at the front of Coot Club on the page "Book One, Coots and Foreigners" is Flash and she is obviously one of a class of racing boat we call Yare & Bure One Designs. In Coot Club, chapter 2 'Disappointment' the motor boat meets five little yachts tacking across the river "like a cloud of butterflies".

All Yare & Bure's have to be named after butterflies or moths. Put that phrase together with the drawing and 'Flash' was definitely one of them but Arthur Ransome deliberately chose another name. We have one at Hunter's yard, Buff Tip. If you choose to go further up the river you will soon see the windmill although the houseboat has long gone and then the entrance to Salhouse Broad (Coot Club ch.12 'Under the Enemy's Nose').

You are now well and truly sailing in the trees. Wroxham is not an easy place for yachts. So unless you want to sail on Wroxham Broad we would suggest that you turn around and sail back down the Bure. You might still have time to visit Barton Broad or just enjoy a cracking sail down to Acle and back.

Neville Khambatta - Chair of Trustees



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- Experience 200KM of exciting river & broads sailing
- Classic 1930s cabin yachts & half-deckers with impressive performance
- Spend time exploring an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

WEBSITE



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Hunter's Yard is home to 22 classic 1930s mahogany yachts, renowned for their fast sailing performance and for their comfort as homes on the water. Our cabin yachts are available with 2-4 berths, electric inboards, and everything else you need for a great holiday.

Call Dan or Martin on 01692 678263 to find out more, or visit huntersyard.co.uk to book your holiday.



HUNTER'S
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