

Wood & Water

Step Aboard & Sail Into History



Heritage Open Day at Hunter's Yard - September 13th



Editorial	2
Social media volunteer wanted	2
Special offers & Skippers wanted	3
Association of Friends	4
A big 'Thank you'	5
Memories	6-7
Yards matters - Restoring Swallow	8-10
Heritage Open Day	11
Meet our Trust Directors	14-15
'The Sea Shall Not Have Them!'	16-17
Endangered skill - Thatching	18-21
The 3 Rivers Race 2025	22-23
Policing the Broads	24-27

In this issue

Pop a note in your diary for September 13th, our Heritage Open Day at Hunter's Yard.

One of the biggest events in the Broads' calendar each year is the Three Rivers Race, 'The toughest inland sailing race in Europe'. Over fifty miles, three bridges and more than 100 sailing boats of all kinds, it is both a spectacle and a big challenge for the crews. Eleven of the Hunter fleet took part this year, vying for the Grapes memorial Trophy for the first time.

Swallow, from the Arthur Ransome Swallows and Amazon books and films, is currently being restored at the yard and Amazon is available for hire.

Along the theme of restoration and boatbuilding skills, a much bigger project is 'Whaleback' the recovery and project to restore a WWII Air-Sea Rescue boat.

We also bring you the history of policing the Broads and a piece about the history of the endangered art of thatching, with our wonderful Norfolk Reed.

Do let us know what you think of Wood & Water and anything particular that you would like to see us cover.

You can contact us using the buttons below

Your Editor



Social media 'star' wanted

As Hunter's Yard and The Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust develops its social media side, we are looking for a local volunteer with the skills, knowledge and time to help us.

Working from home, but welcome to visit the yard for stories, photos and video, we need someone who can steadily 'feed the beast' that is the social media machine. Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, Bluesky/X and Youtube are channels we would like to develop.

Interested to know more; give Martin a call at the yard on 01692678262 or email: manager@hunter-syard.com

Email the Editor

Norfolk Heritage
Fleet Trust

Association of Friends



Hunter's Yard has a YouTube channel with some very interesting videos about how the yard works, excellent instructional pieces and a few not very serious ones, just for fun.

Please visit us by clicking on the YouTube logo and 'Subscribe' to our channel FREE

We hope that you enjoy them and we welcome comments and suggestions.



Young sailors? Special rate

Making it easy for the younger generation to get out sailing, we have introduced a special rate. All season, under 25 age crews get a 20% discount and we hope that will give them the chance for a break from work or before going on to university. If you have family that qualifies, do tell them. .

Have you been coming to Hunter's for years? Let us know your story for the archive

Group or individual - we would love to hear your tales. In the office we regularly find ourselves welcoming hirers who started sailing here 'sixty years ago.' It is quite humbling knowing that you know the yard more than we do and we are keenly aware that we are caretakers of the yard for you and future generations.

We recently welcomed a sailing group from Kent returning for the first time in 40 years having met at the yard as children. They had such an enjoyable time they plan a bi-annual reunion, and we look forward to seeing them in 2026.

If you have been coming for years, send your story and we'll add it to the Hunter's archive for future generations and, if you have photographs, even better.

Donations and Legacies

Not everyone knows that Hunter's Yard is the home 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 introduce 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, most importantly, getting young people out sailing.

If you would like to make a donation or consider a legacy, more information can be found on the Trust website here



Skippers wanted - volunteer

Being able to offer a skippered 2-hour, half-day or full-day sailing experience 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!

Do you love coming to Hunter's Yard and The Broads? Become a Friend.

There are over 900 Friends of Hunter's Yard and they play a vital role in supporting 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. There are regular newsletters and two Friends' gatherings at the yard each year (which raise additional funds for the Trust) 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 cannot get out on their own anymore, there is a week-long skippered sail in the season.



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.

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.

If you feel you would like to support the Trust by becoming a Friend, please visit us [here](#)

Gift vouchers are available from the website

For two-hour, half-day or full-day skippered sails, or vouchers for any purchase of hiring or merchandise at the yard, you can visit the website and look under the 'Shop' tab

Merchandise

All manner of clothing, mugs, books, caps and other items are available to buy on-site.



Small is Beautiful - by Neville Khambatta Trust Chair and Expedition 'Commodore'

I'm sure that many of you will recognise the title which I have 'borrowed' from Schumacher's book of the same name. In June we ran a cruise of three yachts for a small number of students from Acle Academy. Just five days, with up to nine crew sailing the 'Wood' class boats. It's a cruise of two halves, Monday morning to Wednesday lunchtime and then Wednesday afternoon until Friday lunchtime. This means that we can offer a little Expedition Experience for up to 18 young people. The venture is funded by The Ranworth Trust which visited us three years ago to see if there was a way they could support Hunter's

Yard. They were already funding an afternoon for students from Acle to sail half-deckers from Upton and saw what we could offer as a development of that. A meeting with the pastoral heads of year at Acle identified those likely to benefit most from the opportunity to go out for just a very short break on the boats and our first little expedition sailed in 2023.

'Sailed' is not quite what happened that first time as for a variety of reasons we couldn't go out until September and it coincided with one of those September gales! We took a motor cruiser as our command boat and so our first group of nine all learnt to handle a 40-foot motor cruiser. By the end of their time afloat they could drive that boat better than many of the holiday-makers some of us meet when out sailing ourselves ... Enough said! Even though they had hardly been able to sail the students enjoyed it immensely and the staff at Acle reported on the benefits to the young people. The 'Thank You' card you can see illustrates what this year's cruise thought of their Expedition.

We sailed from Hunter's Yard to Barton and spent a night on the Norfolk Punt Club pontoons in the middle of Barton Broad. We had the use of the toilets and most importantly the wonderful gas-fired BBQ. The next day was spent sailing on Barton and then we tied up at the quay heading belonging to the Barton Turf Adventure Centre which allowed us the use of their toilet and shower block. The Wednesday lunchtime changeover is at Ludham Bridge. The programme works because we use three of the yachts fitted with the electric motors.

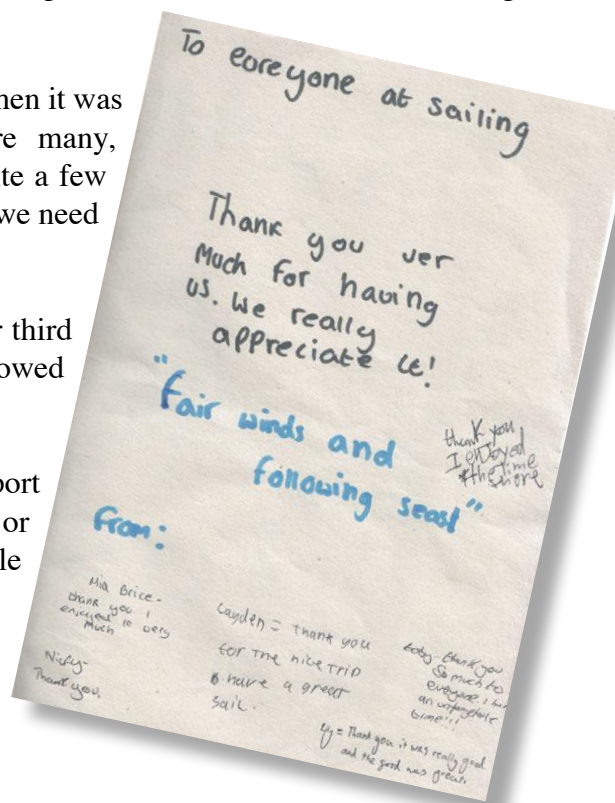
It would be lovely to be out for longer, to take more students, to complete an RYA course, but we are constrained by what is possible within the school timetable and curriculum and the availability of staff willing to accompany the students and skippers able to give the time to the Expedition and sail with demanding young teenagers. What we are doing is not new.

Some of you will know that this is exactly what Hunter's yard did when it was owned and run by the Norfolk County Education Dept. There were many, many Norfolk folk who sailed with the fleet in those years and quite a few now come back to offer their services to the Trust as skippers when we need them.

Is it all worth it, for just two and a half days afloat? This year, our third brief Expedition, two of that first group from 2023 had asked to be allowed to come again. They had caught the sailing 'bug' and wanted more.

Our job now is to try and find a way to get them afloat, to teach, support and see them become qualified RYA instructors so that in five or six years' time they can come back as skippers on yet another Acle Academy Expedition. Will it happen? Can we do it?

Only time will tell, watch this space and keep reading 'Wood & Water'





We love old images about the Broads

These are kindly provided by Philip Bray, one of our Trust Directors and stalwart supporter of all things 'Hunter'

On the very left, leaning against the mast, we have Philip's father during his first Norfolk Broads holiday, on board the cruiser 'Novice' out of Ernest Collins' yard during 1908.

The beautifully dressed lady is Phillip's grandmother, at the helm in 1909.

If you have any old and interesting images of life and leisure on the Broads, perhaps you would consider letting us use them.



We love to receive letters like this

It sums up that 'something special' that so many of our visitors and regulars comment upon.

We hope that many of the hundreds of young people that the Trust brings to the yard and fleet each year will gain confidence, teamwork and decision-making skills during their time with us and take them on into later life. Sailing may become part of their lives. We really hope that in the years and decades ahead, these same young people will return to the water time and again.

The Trust's mission to educate young people, train sailors and preserve Hunter's Yard and its fleet remains relevant, important and valuable as we head towards the yard's centenary.

WITNEY, OXFORDSHIRE

Dear friends,

My son recently sent me a link on YouTube to a film about Hunter's Yard. It brought back so many happy memories that I wanted to write and thank you for all the work you do in maintaining this wonderful fleet of sailing boats.

I first had a week sailing with friends on boats from either Horning or Potter. Soon after we were married, my wife and I were holidaying on a two-berth Bermuda-rigged yacht from Potter. We were tacking down a long straight reach on the Bure with the wind off the starboard bank and against the tide. I was struggling to make progress, when round the corner behind us came a Hustler. The Hustler sailed close-hauled straight down the reach and out of sight ahead of us. At that moment I decided to find out about Hustlers and for the next 30 years we, and then our children, came to Hunters yard every year for a week on a Hustler or a Wood or one of the Ls.

These were the best holidays of my lifetime! No work, no cars, no phones (in those days)!! Sheer bliss. Thank you, thank you.

I remember our son even at the age of 8 or 9 sculling off in the dinghy to fetch water from the staithe. It became his life. In his teens he went to sea with the Ocean Youth Club. Leaving school at 18 he went to train at the International Boatbuilding Training College in Lowestoft, then found a job with one of the Wroxham firms who were opening a base on the river Soane in France. Needless to say he met a French girl and never came home. But he went on to manage a boatyard near Auxerre, until his knees made him retire to a more sedentary job in his 50s.

So what a part the Broads have played in our family life. I am sorry to say that my wife and I had to retire from sailing with you on the Broads in our late 50s; it was the quanting, not the sailing, that we could no longer manage. Now I am 85 but the film about Hunter's Yard brought back so many lovely memories that I want you to know how much pleasure and peace your boatyard contributed to all our lives in years gone by.

Yours sincerely,

Martin

[Watch our videos here](#)

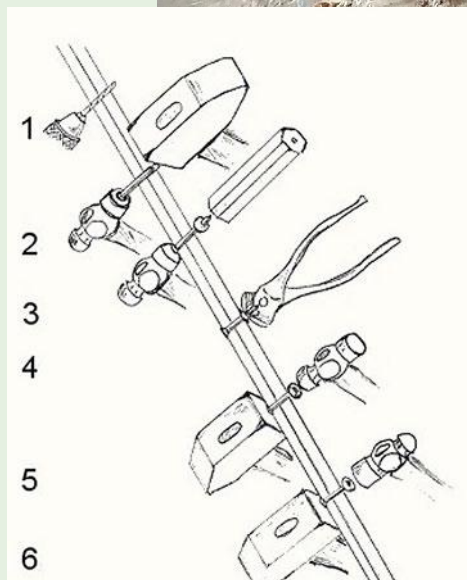
Hunter's Yard and the story of the sailing dinghy Swallow from the 1974 Film "Swallows and Amazons"

In 2023, both Swallow and Amazon (the original dinghies from the 1974 Swallows & Amazons film) found a new home at Hunter's Yard. They joined the existing heritage fleet here, already home to Titmouse, Dreadnought and Lullaby (which portrayed Teasel in BBC's Coot Club and The Big Six from the early 1980s)

Amazon has since undergone a partial restoration and Swallow's is well under way, in the very capable hands of Andy Tween, one of our boat-builders.

While minor repairs can hold things at bay for a while, eventually a sympathetic restoration is needed which aims to preserve historic authenticity, but requires specialised skills, tools, and materials that are increasingly rare. Skilled boat-builders must match original construction methods, which is far more labour-intensive than 'modern' repairs. Here, the staff at Hunter's Yard excel as they are used to the constant maintenance of their glorious fleet of old wooden boats. Swallow is in very good hands indeed.

Do not let the small size of this 12-foot dinghy fool you. To properly restore one takes many, many hours of careful assessment, identifying the issues, determining the correct solution, dismantling and



then creating, by hand, the various parts in different woods, with often complex shapes or bends.

In the case of Swallow for example, all the 20 plus small ribs that run across the hull inside the planks are 'riveted' through the planks using hundreds of copper nails and 'roves' small, dished copper washers. This technique was in use during Viking times. Some of the ribs have 24 rivets. The old ones must be removed to allow the damaged ribs to be taken out and each new rib then is steamed, bent, crafted and tailored for its specific location. Once completed, it is drilled, and riveted into its





Before all the 'riveting' comes the dismantling, removal of all the old fastenings and wooden components, then cutting and shaping replacements from large planks or sections of wood.



After the planks have been cut to size using the original, damaged, sections for a pattern, they are steamed if necessary, to increase their flexibility, put into place and held with clamps, wedges and screws until they

have settled into place.

place. The planks are fixed to each other using the same technique. If you add up all the 'rivets' for the ribs and the planks, it's nearly 1000! Very-time intensive, the tasks of 'persuading' the planks into place and of 'riveting' all the nails and roves are also hard physical work



Once the initial shape has been achieved, they are 'fine-tuned' for fit and finally drilled and 'riveted'.

Other damaged sections are cut out and replaced with new parts, like the rowlock shown above left.

We will show you Swallow in finished form in the next issue.



The History of Swallow

Based on Arthur Ransome's classic 1930 children's novel, the film has become a cherished part of British literary and cinematic heritage. Central to its charm and authenticity is the sailing dinghy Swallow, a traditional wooden boat that embodied the spirit of exploration and independence that Ransome so vividly described. While Swallow is a fictional vessel in the novel, the dinghy used in the film had a real and fascinating origin that adds a further layer of richness to the story.

When the film was agreed in the early 1970s, the production team knew it needed boats that could bring Ransome's tale to life. The team searched for classic wooden sailing dinghies that matched the descriptions from Ransome's books. Eventually, they found the perfect boat at William King & Sons of Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex, a respected boat-building firm with a long tradition of crafting wooden yachts and dinghies. The dinghy was clinker-built, probably between the 1930s and 1950s. William King's craftsmanship was well-established and the initials "WK" were found on the transom, confirming the builder, or at least that was what was thought until 2022 when someone came forward to say his father was the original builder, and had made the hull at home (just as a rowing boat) with a friend, eventually selling it to William King. Proof has been found to support this.

The dinghy had to be modified for use in filming;

- The original sail replaced with a red-brown lug sail
- A hole made in the keel for towing during filming
- Appearance adjustments to match a 1929 look

An exciting passport to ADVENTURE!

Arthur Ransome's
Immortal Story

Swallows &
Amazons



Swallows & Amazons
VIRGINIA McKENNA RONALD FRASER



Despite these changes, the integrity of the original build was preserved. The boat's construction and rigging allowed the young cast to sail her without requiring stunt doubles. In the story, the boat is named 'Swallow' with the name on the bow in a simple, style that suited the period. The same lettering would later help enthusiasts identify the boat decades later.

No original documentation came with the boat, and it had not been named before the film. It was the role it played, 'Swallow' that gave the boat its identity, and it has stuck ever since. The Swallow dinghy used in the 1974 film was not just a prop but a real sailing vessel. Its traditional design and construction made it the perfect vessel to represent Arthur Ransome's classic.

After the 1974 film, Swallow disappeared before being rediscovered and restored decades later. Swallow was stored at a boatyard in Twickenham and for nearly two decades, it sat unused, with its condition slowly declining.

In 2010, Swallow reappeared in an auction listing and enthusiasts from The Arthur Ransome Society and SailRansome acquired the boat and confirmed its identity through the distinctive WK transom mark, measurements, and appearance.

A restoration was carried out in Cumbria and in 2013 it was relaunched, on Coniston Water.

HERITAGE OPEN DAY at Hunter's Yard

SEPTEMBER 13TH 1000AM - 4.30PM - Hunter's Yard, Ludham, NR29 5QG

FREE PARKING AVAILABLE

- Guided tours of the heritage boat yard - Discover the fascinating history of our fleet
- Picnic benches & grassy areas for a family picnic, with indoor seating if the weather turns
- Snap photos with Swallow and Amazon - The classic boats from Arthur Ransome stories
- Watch the Ludham Illuminated Boat Parade from Hunter's from 6:15pm*
- 45-minute skippered taster sails - £5 per person
- Delicious cake, coffee and tea available
- Exciting raffle with sailing prizes
- Games and activities for the whole family

Join us for a visit full of fun, heritage and sailing!







Perfect conditions in the late afternoon sun

Meet our Trust Directors

The Trust Directors act in the charity's best interests, set the strategy, make key decisions and oversee the running of The Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust



Neville Khabatta

I sailed on the Broads for the first time in 1967 with an organised Christian Cruise. I had wanted to learn how to sail from the moment I fell in love with Arthur Ransome and his Swallows & Amazons books.

The greater part of my working life (26 years) was spent working with young people in County Durham, in South London and in Norfolk. During that time I was closely involved with ensuring the survival of Hunter's Yard on the two occasions when the County wanted to sell it.

Even before we moved from London to Norfolk we owned boats on the Broads; a White Boat and a River Cruiser which lived in the top dyke as well as a Norfolk Punt which we raced on Barton. I moved from being 'just a trustee' to being the Chair during the Covid lock-down. My first priority was to ensure the survival of the Yard. We have survived. Now with a developing youth project and the Centenary to look forward to there is a lot going on to keep all our Directors occupied !

Philip Bray

I grew up in Hertfordshire but the family spent all Easter and summer holidays at Sea Palling. My father had been hiring yachts from Percy Hunter at Potter Heigham from 1930 and then he kept his White Boat (No 31) at Hunter's Yard from 1936. My first memories of sailing from the Yard are from about 1950. My visits to Norfolk were not so frequent once I left school. I spent 34 years in the Royal Engineers (as a civil engineer). My last tour of duty, after 10 years abroad in Norway and Germany, brought me back to Norfolk where I renewed my interest in the Yard after coming to the first Friends AGM.



On retirement in 2002 I became secretary of FHF and also started working as a volunteer at the Yard; I was invited to be a Director in 2008 and secretary in 2016.

I sail a 22ft River Cruiser Class cabin yacht built in 1935.

Guy Wilkes

Guy has had a long career in the shipping industry, and for the past 22 years has been handling all sorts of different cargoes around the world. He is a director of an international ports and terminals business.

Guy has been a Director of the NHFT for several years, after joining in 2020 and assisting with developing a post pandemic strategy for Hunters Yard. He is an active member of several sub-committees including HSE and the Marketing Group and is currently Vice Chair.

"I have sailed on the Norfolk Broads since an early age. Helping to maintain the traditions and skills of the yard, preserving the fleet and ensuring it is in good shape for the future seems a good way of giving back to the community. Recent developments with youth sailing and giving access to young people who perhaps previously thought sailing a classic yacht was out of their reach is particularly important and great to see".

Richard Cadman

Dr. Richard Cadman became a Director of The Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust in February 2022. For Richard, the NHFT combines a passion for supporting disadvantaged young people, sailing and classic heritage.

He is Director of SPC. Network Ltd, an economics and regulatory consulting company working primarily in the telecommunications market and holds a PhD in Economics after studying at the Centre for Competition Policy at the University of East Anglia.

He has worked for clients in both fixed and mobile communications as well as governments and regulatory authorities. Richard also has a background in marketing and strategy in IT companies.

He is also Chair of the Booton Parish Meeting and a Trustee of the Norfolk Deaf Association and the Matthew Project.



Meet our Trust Directors

Our Trust Directors are all volunteers and bring their time, professional expertise and experience to the charity and also form sub-committees reporting on Marketing, Fund-raising, Finance, Human Resources, Governance and Health & Safety



Rebecca Smith

Rebecca has been a Trust Director since 2012 and brings a lifelong connection to the Norfolk Broads.

She grew up in Norwich and spent many happy days at her family home in Horning.

Her ties to the Hunter fleet run deep. Her father, the late Bryan Read, was a founding Director and the Trust's first Chair. Rebecca is passionate about sharing the Hunter experience, helping us reach new audiences, and supporting our work with schools and young people to inspire a love of the Broads and sailing.

She works at a North Norfolk primary school, where she's also a Governor, and volunteers with YANA, the farming mental health charity. In her spare time, you'll find her in the garden, with her grandchildren or her flock of sheep, or simply relaxing by the river.



Dominic Chessum

Dominic is a former journalist who currently works as a consultant in the field of public relations, communications and reputation management.

Though his affinity with the Broad stems from his childhood when he used to take motor

cruiser holidays with his family, he only started sailing in the last few years. He fell in love with Hunters Yard the moment he stepped through the door when he came to do his RYA 1 & 2 courses.

He has recently completed his assistant instructor certification, so he is able to help with the sailing activities of the yard alongside his Trust Director role. As a Director he is currently supporting with both fund-raising and marketing.

Roger Long

I am a practicing Solicitor and bring 40 years legal experience to the Trust. I have always been a supporter, customer and Friend of the Yard, first visiting in 1979 and regularly hiring and using the yard since then - my half decker lives



on moorings in the top dyke. I sail with friends and family regularly from the yard. When the Trustee who was legally qualified stepped down, I was invited to apply and did so gladly. I believe the work with children, schools and youth groups as well as the heritage of the yard are very important. How we continue to fulfil and fund those aims as well as encourage the hiring of the yachts is the task I have signed up to. Apart from sailing and maintaining my boat I enjoy time with family, my classic cars, model railways and lots of DIY.

Bob Neate

Bob is a chartered accountant and partner in a large accounting firm. His first association with Hunters was over 10 years ago when he hired some of the fleet to introduce a London youth group to sailing and the Broads. Bob lives and works in London but has a deep love for the Broads and traditional sailing. He is a member of Broad Authority's Navigation Committee and the East Anglia Cruising Club.



James Jack

As a local business owner with strong ties to Norfolk, I became a Director of the Norfolk Heritage Fleet Trust to give something back to the community that's given me so much. I've always valued the importance of preserving our region's heritage and supporting projects that make a real difference locally.

When the chance came to support the Trust, I saw an opportunity to contribute both my time and professional skills. With a background in digital strategy and IT, I aim to help the charity strengthen its presence and reach more people. I'm excited to play a part in securing the Trust's future.





RAF ASR craft including HSL102, now preserved at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

“Dad smiled happily when he recalled receiving HSL133 fresh from the British Power Boat Co., still smelling of paint. She was, he thought, bang up to date, with enough performance to make his heart pound and, above all, she had a captivating beauty. The distinctive curve of the deck earned these boats their nickname, “Whaleback” and gave them a visual appeal that was appreciated by everyone.”

Early in WW2, the Royal Air Force realised that an Air Sea Rescue service was not only important for morale but crucial in the fight to win. Aircraft could be replaced but skilled pilots and crew could not, raising the ASR call to arms: “The Sea Shall Not Have Them” During the war, ASR activity recovered more than 14000 air crew, not only in local waters but wherever there was a need around the globe.

Members of our team and naval architects Andy Selman and Mike Zollo, appreciate both the technical and aesthetic value of the “Whaleback” design by the builders, British Power Boat Co., Hythe and their design team led by Hubert Scott-Payne and George Selman (Andy’s Grandfather. Mike’s Grandfather served in ASR service on these same craft and spent his post war years quietly developing detailed records and plans for model boats, to preserve their history at a smaller scale. The

The Sea Shall Not Have Them

A team of volunteer enthusiasts, each with an individual connection to the project, have joined forces to try to raise awareness of the often forgotten yet crucial work of the Air Sea Rescue service in WW2, by recovering and preserving an original craft as their focal point.

Founder of the “Whaleback for the World” project, Steve Hale, recalls: “Answering the call to defend his country, my father joined up to the RAF Air Sea Rescue service in 1941. In common with many veterans, he never spoke about his war experience, but I do remember a photo that was always hung in every house I lived in as a youngster. It was of a speeding boat he served on, an RAF Air Sea Rescue High Speed Launch (HSL) a “Whaleback”

Project Historian Colin Yorke’s father served as a Coxswain on numerous

team also includes a former owner of this very boat (from the 1960s) and ex-service personnel, all contributing to get the project to Charity status.

Local to where the boat was uncovered in Norfolk, experienced diver Nick Schiller, now Project Chairman, has undertaken critical work by plying the murky depths



Mike Zollo, Nick Schiller, Colin Yorke, Tim Shreeve, Kevin Cooper (LtoR)



the winter 2024/25, the team persisted in attempts to re-float S32. With assistance from Norfolk Fire Museum and old methods for recovery, the team was able to seal the last of any holes and pump out close to 100 tonnes of water from the hull so she could float reliably at last. This is crucial in achieving approval from the Broads Authority, certified tow contractor and insurers, to allow her to be moved on the riverways amongst other traffic.

to plug the breaches in the wooden hull. Tim Shreeve provides detailed local knowledge to the team, being a local of Salhouse, but coming to feel a real connection to the preservation work.

The project team has come together to recover a very rare surviving original ASR craft that has lived an extraordinary life since leaving military service in 1945, long beyond where many could sadly only end their days as neglected houseboats around the UK's rivers & estuaries. a fate mainly sealed when all the engines were removed from these craft under the wartime lend-lease agreement.

MA/SB S32 was built as a 63ft Whaleback, commissioned in 1941, initially destined for Motor Anti-Submarine Boat duties, crewed from the Royal Navy. Their perceived close-proximity U-boat threat never materialised, therefore the 18 that were built were quickly re-deployed, with S32 heading to the Dover base for Air Sea Rescue duties alongside its RAF versions. She was fitted with the same triple W12 Napier Sea lion 500bhp petrol engines as the RAF boats so could match their speeds, in excess of 35knots.

Whilst it is believed that she never served under an RAF ensign, her ASR service is well recorded, including supporting the raid on Dieppe and the liberation of Jersey.

Post-war, she spent a period as a houseboat but was converted (and re-engined) to become private yacht, "Fervent", and headed to a new life in the Mediterranean. Notably, she spent time on either side of the law, successfully entertained celebrities as a deep-sea shark boat and even served up fish and chips from her engine room in a local marina. Now back in the UK again, she spent a number of years forgotten on the Broads before Steve was able to convince the owner to let her move to her next adventure, under preservation. For 6 months over

Now S32 sits at her temporary mooring at Salhouse Broad where she has been welcomed by their Ranger team while the project fund-raises for the next stage in her journey to recovery, being lifted out of the water and given a full structural assessment. The team has a realistic approach to the potential routes for this project with respect to preservation and rebuild, depending on the budget that can be secured. At each step of the way there will be a review of the options to make sound decisions and ensure project goals are achievable, namely to respect the service of S32 and raise awareness of the Air Sea Rescue service during WW2.



To reach the next milestone for the lifting out and assessment, the team needs to take their fund-raising total to £20,000. So far, it has received generous individual donations but are actively seeking corporate backing and heritage grants.

To find out how you can help please visit the project website at: www.whaleback.org

Images and words: Whaleback for the world



During the reed harvest - 1886 - Peter Emerson

Thatching with Norfolk Reed:

Evolving but Unchanged

The ancient art of thatching has long been intertwined with rural architecture, particularly in Europe. Among the various materials employed in this traditional roofing method, Norfolk reed is distinguished for its unique characteristics and local importance. This article explores the history of thatching, the significance of Norfolk reed in the craft, and its importance in contemporary architecture.

A Brief History of Thatching

The practice of thatching dates back millennia, serving as one of the first roofing solutions across numerous cultures. In ancient Europe, thatched roofs were constructed from readily available local materials like straw, reeds, heather, and rushes. These materials were selected not only for their accessibility but also for their insulating properties and effective water-shedding abilities.

Thatching gained substantial popularity during the

Middle Ages, proving to be a sensible choice for rural populations, offering warmth and protection from the elements. The expertise required for thatching was handed down through generations, cultivating a rich tradition that fused artistry with practicality. Houses with thatched roofs often reflected the occupants' wealth and social status, illustrating a strong link between societal standing and architectural style.

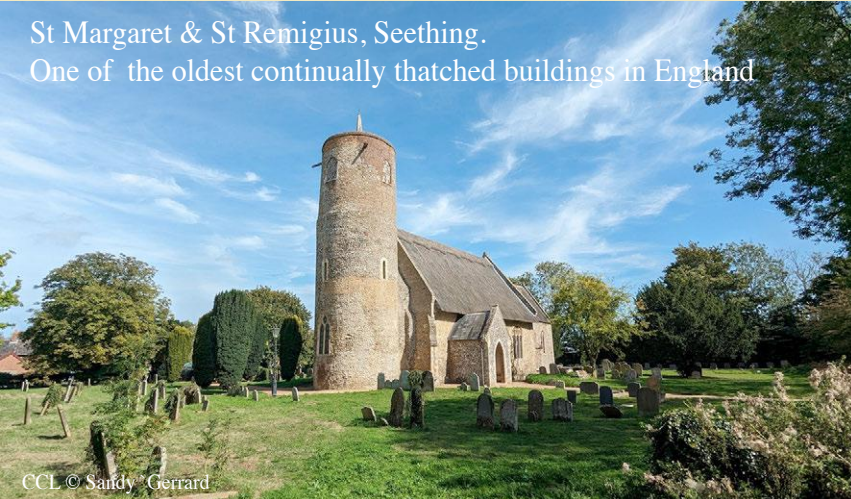
In England, the pinnacle of thatching occurred during the 16th to 18th centuries, with Norfolk reed becoming particularly prevalent in areas where it was plentiful. The craft evolved, adapting to shifts in climate, technology, and design, yet remained deeply ingrained in local culture.

Norfolk Reed: The Ideal Thatching Material

Norfolk reed is a tall, enduring grass that flourishes in marshy areas and wetlands, chiefly along the East Anglian coast. Its distinct features make it an ideal material for thatching.



1886 - Peter Emerson



CCL © Sandy Gerrard

Harvesting and Processing

The collection of Norfolk reed is a demanding task that necessitates precise timing and expertise. Typically, harvesting occurs yearly between December and April once the reeds have matured and dried. Cut at the base, they are then bundled and stored to guard against decay. After harvesting, the reeds undergo processing, including stripping and sorting according to size and quality. Thatchers favour straight, uniform

reeds as they ensure superior coverage and insulation. Properly processed Norfolk reed ensures optimal performance of a thatched roof, enhancing both its lifespan and functionality.

The Thatching Process

Creating a thatched roof using Norfolk reed necessitates a combination of timeless techniques and skilful craftsmanship. This intricate process requires a profound understanding of materials and design principles.

Layering and Securing

The thatcher starts by preparing the roof structure, ensuring it is robust and capable of supporting the thatching weight. Initially, a foundation layer of thicker reeds is laid down and firmly secured to the roof frame. As layers are added, thinner reeds are placed on top, crafting a dense and weatherproof surface

Properties of Norfolk Reed

One of the most remarkable attributes of Norfolk reed is its longevity, lasting up to 60 years with proper maintenance, making it a durable alternative compared to other thatching resources. Its hollow stems form an air space, providing exceptional insulation and effectively regulating indoor temperatures. Furthermore, the intrinsic waterproofing quality of Norfolk reed ensures roofs remain dry, thus avoiding leaks and water damage. The aesthetic appeal of Norfolk reed also boosts its popularity. Its golden hue and smooth texture add visual charm, complementing diverse architectural styles, from rustic cottages to stately country homes. Consequently, it plays a crucial role in preserving the historical ethos of many English villages, where thatched roofs are a treasured facet of local heritage.



Happisburgh Hall, thought to be the largest thatched domestic roof in East Anglia

CCL © Stuart Logan



Finishing Touches

With the fundamental structure complete, the thatcher expertly trims and shapes the reeds to achieve an aesthetically pleasing finish. This final layer is vital not only for looks but also for functionality, as it guides water away from the roof, preventing accumulation. Finishing touches may include ornamental features like ridges, which enhance visual appeal while serving practical functions.

Maintenance of Thatch

Even with the durability of Norfolk reed, regular upkeep is essential to extend its lifespan. Homeowners are advised to conduct periodic inspections of their thatched roofs, checking for signs of wear or damage. Simple repairs can often be carried out to rectify minor issues, preserving the roof's integrity and preventing more serious damage.

Renewed Interest in Thatching in Modern Architecture

Today, there is an increasing interest in

traditional building methods, including thatching with Norfolk reed. As sustainability becomes a central focus in construction, many architects and builders are revisiting these age-old techniques that inherently support eco-friendliness.

Eco-Friendly Benefits

Using Norfolk reed as a roofing material aligns seamlessly with modern sustainability objectives. The material is renewable, biodegradable, and has a





educational initiatives are emerging to train a new generation of thatchers. Workshops, apprenticeships, and community projects are spreading knowledge and skills, ensuring that this beautiful craft continues to endure.

Thatching with Norfolk reed transcends being merely a roofing technique; it embodies a rich cultural heritage and sustainable practice that has withstood the test of time. From its historical importance to its modern applications, the narrative of Norfolk reed thatching mirrors humanity's ingenuity in adapting and evolving while respecting our past.

minimal carbon footprint, making it an environmentally conscious selection. Moreover, it enhances energy efficiency, reducing heating costs and the long-term impact on the environment.

New Applications and Innovations

Innovations in the thatching industry have led to exciting new applications. Modern designs often incorporate thatched roofs into contemporary homes and commercial buildings, merging traditional aesthetics with modern functionality. This blend not only preserves cultural heritage but also results in unique architectural statements. As interest in historical building methods flourishes,



Whether admiring a charming countryside cottage or contemplating an eco-friendly construction project, the allure and practicality of thatched roofs continue to inspire and enhance our architectural landscape, fostering a greater appreciation for sustainable living.

Thank you to Richard at Broadland Thatchers for the images on these two pages.

www.broadlandthatchers.co.uk





Three Rivers Race 2025

A Night to Remember on the Norfolk Broads

The Yachtmaster Insurance Three Rivers Race set off from Horning Sailing Club at 11am on Saturday, 31st May, with 108 boats tackling the legendary 24-hour, 50-mile Norfolk Broads challenge.

A Race of Contrasts and Challenges

The 64th running of the Three Rivers Race began under blue skies and warm sunshine, a stark contrast to last year's record-breaking pace. But while the weather seemed kind, strong and shifting tides told a different story, turning this iconic endurance race into a true test of patience, planning, and seamanship.

Bunn's Eighth Victory

In an historic moment, Chris Bunn helmed Fox (Yare & Bure One Design), with crew Matthew Frary, to a record-breaking eighth victory—securing five trophies and solidifying Bunn's place as the most successful sailor in race history. Against the tide—literally and tactically—Fox took the bolder, less-travelled route via the Lower Bure, a decision that ultimately paid off.

Fox (pictured above left) took home:

Three Rivers Trophy (Overall Winner)
New Three Rivers Trophy
Peter Cumming Tankard

Puffin Trophy
Howes Salver

Stalled at Stracey: A Long Night on the Bure

As darkness fell, so did the wind. Around 50 boats became trapped near the turning point at Stracey Arms, clinging to any forward momentum they could find. Some sat stationary for hours until the breeze mercifully returned just before dawn, causing a rush of boats downstream and plenty of action for the race guardships.

Bridges, Cheers, and Close Calls

The bridges did not disappoint. Crowds at Potter Heigham were treated to daring mast drops and slick recoveries, with Fox, Ladybird (Ben Knight), and Moonmoth (James Street) showcasing incredible skill. In one dramatic moment, a crew member fell overboard and drifted under the bridge—safely rescued thanks to quick reactions and a lifejacket.

The Final Push to the Line

The first boat to finish was Tim Frary's India (River Cruiser) just after midnight. Though slowed by the final stretch through Horning, he earned third overall on corrected time.

Finishers continued to arrive well into Sunday morning, with one boat making it with just 20 seconds to spare. Sadly, six teams missed the 24-hour cutoff despite giving it their all.

Top 10 Results (Corrected Time)

Fox - Chris Bunn (YBOD)
Firefly - Roger Hannant (Yeoman)
India - Tim Frary (River Cruiser - pictured above right)
Vacuna - Simon Bryan (River Cruiser)
Haven't a Clue - Paul Wren & Jordan Rumsby (Wayfarer)
Minnie - Kevin Edwards (Norfolk One Design Dinghy)
Rothay - Peter Brown (Rebel)
Painted Jezebel - David Means (YBOD)
Grayling - Peter Goshawk (River Cruiser)

David Hastings MBE, one of the race's founding visionaries in 1961, was once again on hand to watch this year's fleet set off. Though much has changed over six



decades, the 2025 race evoked the spirit of those early year; narrow waters, starlit skies, and winds rising in the small hours to test every sailor's resolve.

Eleven of the Hunter's Yard fleet took part, although only six finished within the time available, or retired

Boat	Skipper	Corrected time
Hustler 1	Nigel Cowley	18.25.02
Hustler 2	Steven Tupper	19:05:47
Hustler 3	Nick Henwood	18:00:40
Hustler 4	Chris Jobling	19:05:57
Hustler 5	Nicky Johnson	18:29:46
Wood Avens	Alan Goodchild	
Wood Sorrel	John Coe	
Wood Anemone	Martin Ross	
Lullaby	Simon Eddison	
Buff Tip	Jerome Mayhew	
Woodcut 1	Mike Davies	

Nick Henwood and the crew of Hustler 3 will receive the inaugural Grapes Memorial Trophy at the prize-giving at Horning Sailing Club on Saturday October 25th

Team Bailey and Reedling 'Jaws' RK4

Hunter's own, Ezra Bailey, skippered by his father Stuart came a creditable 23rd overall in Reedling 'Jaws' taking the Hickling route.

The only Reedling in this year's event, they finished in 14:19:09 on corrected time.

Jaws was built in 1964, one of only eleven Reedlings ever built.

Find out more about the history of the 3 Rivers Race here at 3RR.UK





As they celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Broads Beat unit, members of Norfolk Constabulary can look back and take pride in its long history. Broads Beat in its current form began in 1995, but the constabulary has patrolled the Broads since the 1820s. Patrols continued in various boats until 1984, when the boats were retired. They returned in 1995, thanks to the support of sponsors. Broads Beat is recognised as the nation's longest-running police and public sponsorship scheme.

Broads Beat officers:

- Provide a visible police presence to local communities and businesses as well as to many visitors and tourists in the Broads
- Help the Broads Authority enforce local by-laws, though most by-laws such as speeding and river tolls are enforced by the Authority
- Patrol alongside Broads Authority Navigation Rangers to help reduce anti-social behaviour and disorder
- Promote the Project Kraken intelligence collection plan
- Promote water safety, as an average of four deaths each year occur in the Broads from drowning and boating accidents
- Offer crime prevention advice and assist with investigations, gathering intelligence, and protecting vulnerable individuals

History of Policing the Norfolk Broads



- Work with partner agencies, departments, and stakeholders to solve problems

The team oversees 116 square miles, which include 125 miles of the seven rivers connecting the 63 broads within the Norfolk Broads National Park. Alongside preventing and investigating crime, it provides safety and security advice to boat owners and businesses along the waterways.

The Norfolk Broads is renowned for its peaceful beauty, rich biodiversity, and popularity with tourists and sailors. However, beneath this belies a rich history filled with law enforcement challenges. The Broads' complex of waterways and secluded spots have long been exploited by criminals, from smugglers in



'A2' IN 1937 WITH PC FRANK HARRISON, SGT. E. NOBBS AND PC ARTHUR JOHNSON ONBOARD (LEFT TO RIGHT)

the 18th century to modern thieves and environmental offenders.

Policing the Broads has changed from relying on informal parish constables to a modern unit with specially trained officers. This article follows the evolution from the earliest attempts to maintain order on the waterways to today's sophisticated Norfolk Police Marine Unit, known as Broads Beat.

During the 18th century, the Broads were isolated and poorly connected to local towns and villages. This remoteness made them ideal for smuggling. Illegal imports of tobacco, tea, brandy, and even firearms were brought in via the North Sea, through Great Yarmouth, and deep into Norfolk. Smugglers used flat-bottomed boats and local knowledge to evade customs officers.

Before organised police forces were established, crime prevention was the responsibility of parish constables and night watchmen. These were often local volunteers or poorly paid part-time officials without much power or resources. Smugglers, sometimes supported by local interests, were hard to catch and even harder to convict. Local communities often ignored or helped smugglers, who were sometimes seen as folk heroes avoiding unfair taxes. Early law guardians struggled to navigate the Broads and were often outsmarted by those familiar with its secret routes.

As the Victorian period advanced, the Broads began to attract attention, not just from smugglers, but eventually from holiday-makers. The extensive railway expansion made the area accessible to tourists from London and other cities. This influx created new policing challenges, including theft, disorderly behaviour, and accidents involving inexperienced sailors. Regulations also increased during this time, requiring oversight in river traffic laws, vessel licenses, and fishing restrictions, placing more demands on the local constabulary.

The Norfolk police forces mainly relied on river-based officers who patrolled by boat. Their duties included inspecting boats, enforcing fishing laws, and ensuring safe navigation on the increasingly busy waterways.

Norfolk Constabulary was established in 1840, becoming one of the first modern rural police forces in the country. By the late 19th century, police began taking a more active role on the Broads, especially as powered boats increased river traffic.

The first police motorboat in Norfolk was introduced by

Norwich City Police force in 1912 to patrol the River Wensum. The first purpose-built launch, called 'A2,' was constructed for the Norfolk Constabulary by Jack Powles & Co. of Wroxham and launched in 1936. It had sleeping space for the three crew members (known as 'River Roberts') in case they couldn't return to their Horning mooring in time.

The early 20th century saw continued growth in tourism and recreational boating, especially during the 1920s and 1930s. Policing the Broads during this time required balancing the needs of local communities with those of a rising number of visitors.

During World War II, the Broads became strategically important. The waterways were used for military training and transport, and parts of the Broads were sealed off. Police responsibilities included enforcing curfews, blackout regulations, and monitoring for espionage or sabotage. River patrols worked with military units to protect vital infrastructure.

After the war, tourism increased significantly. In the 1950s and 1960s, thousands of families rented cruisers and sailing boats for holidays. Boat hire businesses grew in towns like Wroxham, Potter Heigham, and Beccles, making the waterways busier than ever. This tourism boom brought prosperity but also strain, as unprepared holiday-makers contributed to accidents, pollution, and congestion on the waterways.

A new 'A2' police patrol boat was launched in 1956, and it even had a toilet!



THE NEW A2 BEING BUILT AT JACK POWLES' YARD AT WROXHAM

With the rise in tourism came a higher incidence of:

- Sailing under the influence of alcohol.
- A surge in petty theft, especially from moored boats.
- Environmental damage from littering and fuel spills.

Policing in the Broads changed to address these issues. Waterborne operations expanded, with officers on peak season full-time river patrol duties. Co-operation between the police and the newly-established Broads Authority in 1989 became essential. Officers focussed not only on enforcing the law but also promoting navigational safety

found alive on board. Investigators determined it was a murder-suicide. This incident shocked the local boating community and highlighted the need for mental health awareness and crisis response training for officers.

• 2016 Stag Party Saves Police Truck

In a unique incident in 2016, a police boat trailer got stuck in the mud at Horning. A nearby stag party, dressed as pirates, helped the officers retrieve the trailer, turning an awkward situation into a community-building story that made national headlines.

• Illegal Fishing and Wildlife Crimes

In the late 2010s, authorities caught several Eastern European poaching gangs illegally fishing and using banned nets. These night-time operations targeted pike and carp and caused significant ecological damage. Broads Beat, often collaborating with Operation Randall (a rural crime task force), successfully apprehended several repeat offenders.



and environmental protection.

Education became a priority. Police worked with boat rental companies to promote safety briefings and distribute leaflets. They also conducted spot checks on vessels for safety equipment and intoxicated operation.

Reports of stolen boats, illegal fishing, and drug-related activities rose during the 1980s and 1990s.

Several incidents over the years have demonstrated the on-going need for effective policing in the Broads:

• 2012 Wroxham Murder-Suicide

In September 2012, two bodies were discovered aboard a moored hire cruiser. Their 13-year-old daughter was

• 2020 River Bure Boat Chase

In July 2020, a dramatic chase occurred on the River Bure after a domestic violence report. A man was seen fleeing on a private vessel before surrendering peacefully. Although no charges were filed, the case showed the challenges of pursuing suspects through the Broads' winding and often dark waterways.

• **2021 Boat Crash** at Oulton Broad led to calls for stricter enforcement of speed limits and alcohol checks.

• **Flooding in Winter 2023** saw police coordinating evacuations and helping emergency services during severe storms.



Today, the Marine Unit operates three vessels, with two based at Well-Next-The-Sea on the coast (working with the Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority) and one at Wroxham in the heart of the Broads.

The unit consists of 12 maritime trained officers, 8 Special Officers, and police support volunteers. Two team members are also qualified drone pilots.



Effective policing relies on partnerships with ten other agencies to protect and patrol the waterways while sharing intelligence.

Law enforcement in this unique area involves more than just apprehending criminals. It includes education, environmental care, and ensuring that the Broads remain a safe and welcoming space for everyone. In this way, the legacy of early river patrols continues with today's officers, who care for the same waters using new tools but with the same enduring mission.

In conclusion, policing has always been a balancing act, working to maintain public safety and security while supporting freedom and promoting tranquility. No matter what challenges officers face during their work, they cope, often putting their own safety aside, and then returning to their families as if nothing had happened. Along with all other first responders, we owe them our deepest respect, sometimes our lives, and gratitude for their service.

Thank you to the Norfolk Constabulary Historians and the Norfolk Constabulary Maritime Unit for the images

Links: [Norfolk Constabulary](#)

[Broads Authority](#)

[Eastern Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority](#)

The long-term support of sponsors has been crucial to the success of Broads Beat, allowing the unit to stay current with equipment and vessels for safer, easier, and more effective operations and faster responses. This tremendous support is even more important as vital equipment and the vessels themselves reach the end of their effective working life.

The history of policing the Norfolk Broads reflects broader changes in British society, from the rural smuggling routes of the 18th century to today's technologically equipped marine patrols. As environmental concerns grow and tourism continues to rise, the Broads need a thoughtful, flexible, and community-focused approach to policing.



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