



MOORINGS

Issue 8 Newsletter from the Neil Thompson Boatyard

IT'S BEEN A GOOD YEAR

It has been a really busy year here at the yard. We successfully completed the two new Norfolk Explorers and both have enjoyed their first season out on the water. We taken an order for and completed the building of a new Norfolk Gypsy and have taken orders for and started building two new Norfolk Oysters – this leads me to believe that the economy is definitely on the up.

Following on from such a great year, we have seen in the press that the Duchess of Cambridge is a patron for the 1851 Trust. ***The 1851 Trust aims to inspire and engage a new generation through sailing and the marine industry, providing young people with the education, skills and training to become innovators of the future, and stewards of the marine environment.***

We whole heartedly agree with this campaign statement that can be found on the 1851 website. It is important to make sailing and the marine industry accessible to all of the young people living within Britain. We are an island nation with a long and proud heritage of being home to some of the worlds most famous and legendary sailors, boat builders and explorers. We make our greatest discoveries, and experience moments of triumph, when the boundaries are pushed. We need to keep pushing against the bureaucratic boundaries that are being set which makes it difficult to assist young people, from all backgrounds, in getting out on the water.



Will we see William and Kate on the water next year?

Children *are* our future for the sport and our industry and it is important that the next generation carries on seeking pleasure and employment from the many marine activities and opportunities that are available to islanders. We are looking forward to seeing how and what progress the Duchess of Cambridge can make to such a worthwhile cause, especially as she is going to be living in Norfolk. She definitely needs to get herself a Norfolk Oyster so that she can go sailing with the children whilst Will is at work. Maybe that can be the NTB project for 2015, to get Will and Kate into the Norfolk Range Owners Club....

PRESS REVIEWS

It's been a great year for press reviews and features on the boats. We had **Classic Boats** 'Class Notes' do an article on the Norfolk Oyster in April, **Anglia Afloat** covered the Norfolk Explorer unveiling in May and then the launch in the July issue. **MOG** magazine (Morgan Cars Magazine) has written a six page spread in their December issue on Neil Thompson Boats and the Norfolk Range. All of these and past reviews can be viewed on our website or we can email pdf copies to you should you wish.



UNVEILING of EXPLORER and HONDA SHOWROOM

In April we held the unveiling of the Norfolk Explorer and opening of the Honda Showroom. This was well attended by over 100 people and was a good start to the season with many asking if it could become an annual event as it was great to catch up with others in the sailing community after the winter.

Neil and I would like to do this but April is one of our busiest times of year. We are going to have a brand new Gypsy and two new Oysters to show off though so a few drinks to celebrate may be required.



HONDA MARINE



HONDA SHOWROOM

It has been a great first year for us as Honda dealers. We were one of only 18 UK dealers to exceed their annual sales targets. The showroom incorporates a small chandlery for the local boating fraternity, where they can buy paint, rope, shackles and other boating paraphernalia.

As most of the local chandleries have closed shop, this outlet (which is an organised and presentable version of our workshop store) is proving a much needed service for some.



INSURANCE, TRACKERS AND WHEEL CLAMPS

Not only was this a hugely busy year for us but it was compounded by having our first ever break-in. We have been at this sight for 14 years and have held our breath whilst yards all along the coast and round us have been broken into, on almost an annual basis, so it was very upsetting to realise that at the start of the Easter weekend in April, a gang of Eastern Europeans had entered our storage field.

The only access point was over freshly ploughed agricultural fields and shows how determined they were to get to us. They took ten outboard engines, which was a huge blow. In the same evening, the same gang hit four other boat yards along the Norfolk Coast as well as stealing outboards from the coastal harbours.

Since this we have been working on our security systems, and in partnership with Norfolk Constabulary, trialling trackers to place inside outboard engines. Various tracking systems are available but we would recommend **The Enforcer 3 GPS Tracker** with a long life battery. This is an incredibly sensitive and effective tracker that works by sensing movement and then texting two pre-programmed numbers so that you are alerted to the theft and can track it immediately. Once activated it will send live updates every minute. We can supply this system for £342.00 (inc. vat), it also comes with a user friendly app for iphones and ipads, and 100 position credits (a pay as you go system rather than a yearly subscription).

The other issue that the burglary highlighted to us was the necessity for customers to ensure that their boats and engines are covered with the appropriate level of insurance. And that owners are clear about the terms and conditions set when leaving boats over winter. We are now urging everyone to check their policies to make sure that they are using the correct locks over the winter, is it a wheel clamp or hitch lock that you should be using? The wrong one will invalidate your insurance and make a successful claim, in the event of theft, unlikely.



2015 REGATTA DATES and PLANS

This years Regatta was a special event, being the Norfolk Oyster 25th year anniversary. It was the most amazing regatta that Richenda and I have hosted in our ten-year tenure. For us, a record number of boats entered, and there would've been more had the weather conditions not been so challenging on both the Friday and Saturday. Friday's practice day saw winds gusting to force 6 at times. Every boat had a compulsory reef and the 2 lap course was completed within an hour by most boats, this made for very tired competitors with some retiring from the following days race.

Saturday brought slightly less wind, sunny skies and an excited bunch of sailors of varied ability. Everyone had a cracking sail; the race was fantastic with a friendly and supportive vibe.

The race results were:

Oysters: 1st - Mike and Judith Shallow in 'Pearl Fisher'
2nd - James and Victoria Cown in 'Annie'
3rd - Paul Miller in 'Plover'

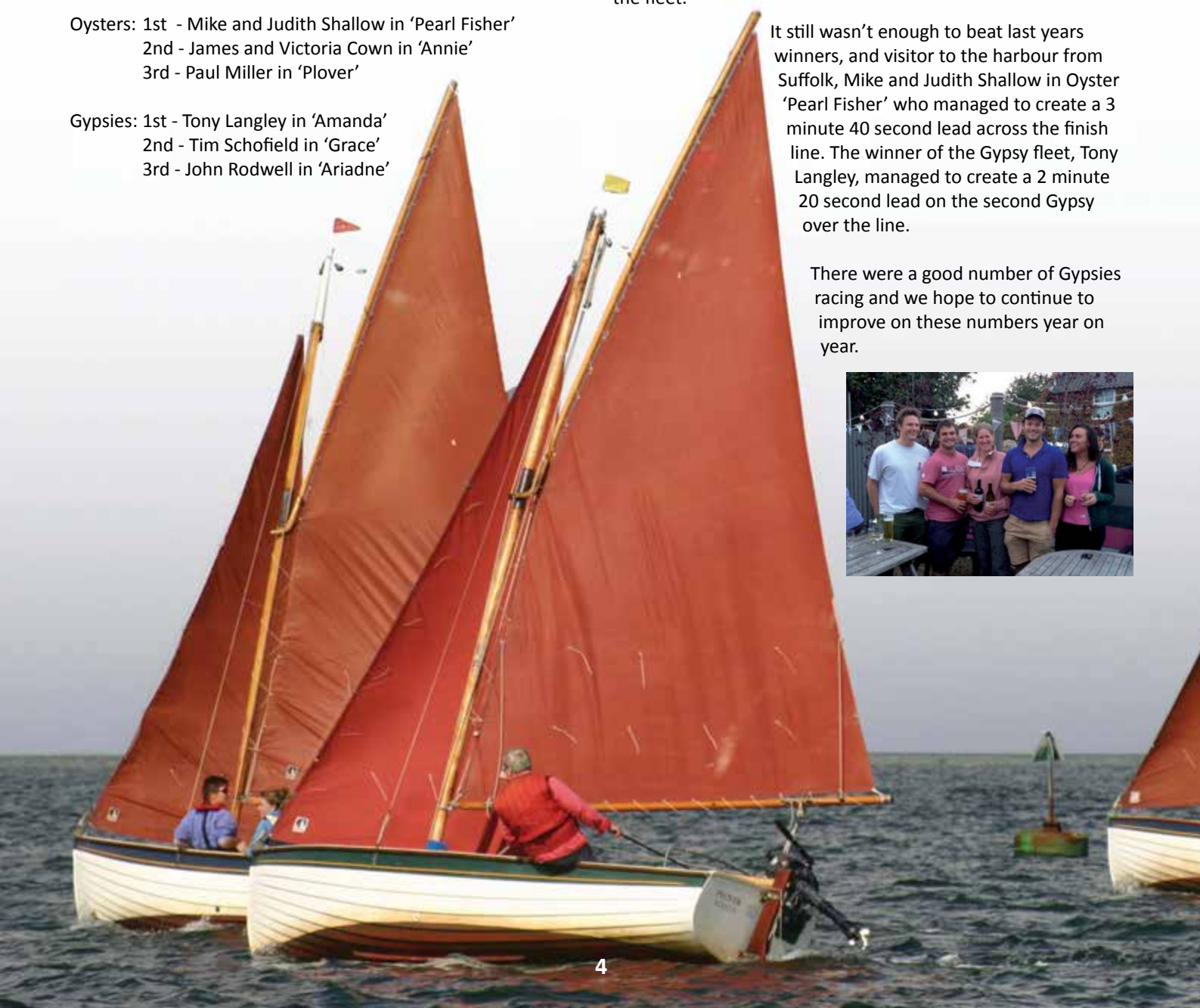
Gypsies: 1st - Tony Langley in 'Amanda'
2nd - Tim Schofield in 'Grace'
3rd - John Rodwell in 'Ariadne'

A special mention, and thank you, to the crew from New Zealand who had the tough role of deciding the tie-break winner in the Nautical Quiz on the Saturday evening. The helm of the New Zealand crew, Alice Brown and her mother, Lindy Kilmaine, kindly donated a new trophy for competitors, the Kilmaine Plate.

This was awarded to the boat that was seen to be employing tactics rather than just following the fleet. The plate is dedicated to Lindy's husband and Alice's father, John, who was a keen competitor in the regatta and would always try to take a different course from the rest of the fleet. This paid off in 2010 and saw he and Lindy the winners of the Norfolk Oyster race in their Oyster 'Flapper'. James Cowan was awarded the plate as he managed to go from middle of the fleet to second by taking advantage of the tide and taking different tacks to the rest of the fleet.

It still wasn't enough to beat last years winners, and visitor to the harbour from Suffolk, Mike and Judith Shallow in Oyster 'Pearl Fisher' who managed to create a 3 minute 40 second lead across the finish line. The winner of the Gypsy fleet, Tony Langley, managed to create a 2 minute 20 second lead on the second Gypsy over the line.

There were a good number of Gypsies racing and we hope to continue to improve on these numbers year on year.



With more boats attending the race and demand out-stripping supply for the nautical quiz night we have decided to change the format of the weekend for the 2015 regatta. It will be held on **Friday 10th July through to 12th.**

The practice race will be held on the Friday with the nautical quiz being hosted in the Anchor Inn on Friday evening. The race will be held on Saturday and will be followed by the prize giving and then a hog roast and band in Morston. There will be a relaxed race on the Sunday followed by a novelty prize giving and farewell drinks.

If you would like to visit and take part in the race then please contact Richenda as we can help with moorings for visiting boats and can arrange accommodation, including a field for camping. We would like to encourage Norfolk Oysters and Gypsies from further a field and are hoping that this three-day event will make it a worthwhile visit to North Norfolk. The hog roast and party will be a child friendly event making sure that all of the family can be included in the fun.



NEW GYPSY IN BUILD

The first Gypsy to be built in ten years is almost completed and will be sailing off Colchester in the spring, trialling a new carbon fibre mast and gaff. Every part of this boat has been crafted in-house, with the exception of the metal work, which has been sourced locally, so we can be sure that the quality exceeds our exacting standards.

This Gypsy will be completed by the time you are reading this and we will have begun to build the two new Norfolk Oysters that have been ordered. The first of these new build Norfolk Oysters is for a chap who is fulfilling a long-held ambition of learning to sail and owning a Norfolk Oyster. We are very happy to have been able to help him, especially as the new owner had a 12-month lead time on his new boat and so Richenda and I gave him exclusive use of our own Norfolk Oyster so that he could get sailing. The two new Norfolk Oysters will be local boats and so we look forward to seeing them and their owners out in the harbour.



MEMBERSHIP SCHEME FOR ANNUAL CUSTOMERS

On our family holiday, Chenda and I spent our time beside the pool and beach, reading business books. Although not your average holiday read they were insightful and full of good tips and advice.

One of the points raised was how to re-pay customers for their loyalty and Chenda and I are keen to embrace this as we really like and value all of the owners of the Norfolk Range, but especially those regular annual customers, some of whom bring their boats to us from the far flung corners of the UK.

We have decided to introduce a membership scheme for those customers and they will receive a 10% discount on any covers, chandlery items or spare parts purchased throughout the season. All annual customers will be issued with a membership pack in January with offers and terms and conditions.

RIGGING UPGRADES

Our riggers are now making us high quality stainless steel rigging complete with beautiful hand stitched leather for gaff spans and mainsheet straps etc. These add extra detailing and class, really finishing the classic look of the Norfolk Range.

With many of the boats now over twenty years old we would recommend that the rigging is thoroughly checked and inspected, including shackles etc, for signs of broken strands and fractures. A lot of corrosion can go unnoticed, hidden by the copper ferules and stainless swages; this is why insurance companies, for larger yachts, will insist that the standing rigging is replaced every 12 years. For prices and more info please call or email the office.



ENGINE INSPECTIONS FOR GYPSIES

Again, as with the rigging of the older boat, the engines in the Norfolk Gypsies are incredibly reliable units that are capable of a very long life span. But they are aging and so need to be thoroughly inspected.

The Achilles heel of the Yanmar 1GM appears to be its lip seals on the water pump. If this goes unchecked it will leak salt water onto a vulnerable oil pipe located beneath which then will rust.

So with this in mind we are going to make it a standard recommendation that any oil lines are replaced at the first sign of corrosion. If left this damage will result in loss of oil pressure, and could seriously damage the engine if the warning buzzers are ignored.

COCKLE TO PALMA

Our reputation for offering high quality re-spray work, with attention to fine detailing, is growing. We have refurbished two 28ft yachts in Awlgrip paint, the No.1 paint choice for super yacht owners, and pictures of these can be seen our Facebook page.

A very exciting job for us, which came into the yard at the end of the summer, is the complete NTB makeover of a locally built boat, the Stiffkey Cockle. The new owner of this Cockle has bought it as an additional tender to go on his beautiful 160ft Ketch. We are stripping the Cockle back, re-spraying it with Awlgrip paint to match perfectly the colour scheme of the yacht, including gold-leaf coveline and Awlgrip's high spec varnish for the spars and woodwork. Already the boat looks great having had just her hull re-sprayed. We are all excited by this project as we are taking a simple sail boat and turning it into an elegant luxury. Jeckells sail makers are making a new suit of sails with a new improved cut, in cream to match the Ketch.



Once the work is complete in a couple of weeks, I will trail the boat to it's new home aboard the Ketch in Palma, Majorca. It's amazing to think that our little piece of Norfolk refurb work will be travelling around the world.

MORGAN VISIT

Having reached the end of our five year plan and needing to re-evaluate and reassess the business direction, Richenda contacted Morgan and asked if we might have a meeting with someone to discuss their business model as we felt ours should be similar. To our surprise we were booked in for a tour of the factory, followed by a meeting with the MD, Steve Morris. Chenda and I were both thrilled as we love Morgan cars and the company ethos.

It is an amazing factory, with the Malvern Hills as it's backdrop. Anyone who enjoys cars or engineering processes should make a point to visit and attend one of their public tours. It was a joy to see the cars being handcrafted by the skilled men and women of Morgan Motors. Steve Morris met with us after the tour and was one of the most inspirational people that Chenda and I have met. He started his career with Morgan as an apprentice and worked in all areas of the factory before making his way up the ladder. With Steve, we discussed the manufacturing processes and how similar our two companies are, albeit on an entirely different scale, and he helped to clarify in our mind that we should be aiming for organic and sustainable growth that keeps our current ethos of quality products coupled with good customer service at the core of our business. Following our meeting with Steve, he instructed Mog (the official Morgan Car Magazine) to feature us as their 'British Business of the Month'. The monthly feature spotlights British businesses who resonate the same quality and passion as Morgan. We are in the December issue which is out now and available from WHSmith.

This meeting and a couple of others that we have had with some incredible business people have really helped shape and cement our ideas and drive for the next five years. Chenda and I feel renewed and excited by the refreshed plans to take the business forward, we are aiming for small but mighty.



*'At Neil Thompson Boats we are aiming for **small but mighty.**'*



GIFT IDEAS

FACEBOOK, TWITTER & WEBSITE

We want to see pics of your boats on our facebook, twitter and website pages.



We've had great fun with the facebook and twitter pages this year and have featured pictures of boats used in wedding processions, sailing in grevelingenmeer, Netherlands and on Rutland water. We want to see and share more of your sailing pictures and adventures.

Please email any to the office or message them directly onto our Facebook or Twitter pages. It's a long cold winter and any stories or sunny pictures are going to cheer us up and inspire our followers for the 2015 sailing season. If you love your boat then don't be shy, shout about it to us and we'll shout even louder. Let's get this tiny corner of North Norfolk buzzing with nautical news.

NEW TRAINEES AT THE YARD

With the additional work generated by the new boat orders, we have taken on two trainees who will work alongside Ashley over the winter and be trained up in every aspect of boat maintenance and servicing.

Andrew is a retired major who wants to get back to working as a team and to put some of his mechanical skills to service. Blake too has mechanical skills and both he and Andrew are very enthusiastic to get working on the boats and show us what they can do.

Why not treat yourself to one of our fantastic commemorative sweatshirts or hoodies to keep you warm over the festive season. These are available in a range of colours and sizes and can be viewed on our Facebook or Twitter pages.

Or you could buy one of **Neil Fosters Norfolk Gypsy and Oyster 2015 Calendar**, there are many faces in the calendar (which are available in wall or desk format) from this years regatta so great stocking fillers for fellow Norfolk Range friends or family.

The **2015 tide timetables** are now available, at £1.50 each, a great stocking filler idea. We are able to post out any items that you might require so please phone the office to place your order.



PAINTINGS BY DEREK BLOIS

When one thinks of portraits, it's usually about faces and figures or sometimes, even pets. But have you thought about a boat portrait? You can have your very own craft set in a painting at a size to suit. To give you an idea of the standard of work, the commissioned painting below is Norfolk Gypsy, Ariadne III owned by Jonathon and Amanda Rodwell.

If you are interested in commissioning a painting of your own craft or anything else, then please email derekblois@gmail.com

You can see Derek's work on **Facebook** at **Paintings by Derek Blois** or on www.oilsandwatercolours.co.uk



We wish everyone a very happy Christmas and a very prosperous New Year.

We will be back at the yard in the new year on 5 Jan 2015