

# MOORINGS

Issue 13 Newsletter From the Neil Thompson Boatyard

## THE FAMILY TOUCH:

In June we were lucky enough to be up in the west coast of Scotland, working on a boat of course. Our trip was close to Richenda's birthday so she told me that 'we must take a few days off and head to Orkney'. I was reluctant. Orkney was miles away, a four hour road trip and that's without the ferry crossing; but it was Richenda's birthday and Orkney was on her bucket list so while I considered it, Richenda booked and organised it.

If you've not been to Orkney then you should make the trip. It is amazing. I've never been anywhere that has so much ancient history. We tried to get to all of the heritage sites but there are just so many and more being discovered all the time. While looking at all the standing stones, chambered carin and Neolithic homes were fascinating, by far the highlight for Richenda was seeing the Shelia Fleet workshop. Before visiting Orkney I had no idea who Shelia Fleet was or what she did but Richenda is like a magpie and drawn to anything sparkly so I should have known the Shelia Fleet workshop is a jewellery workshop. The children and I were told we couldn't complain as this was Richenda's birthday.

We were met at the Shelia Fleet café and Gallery in Kirk by Martin. He began to talk to us about how jewellery is first designed, then made and as he talked to us about the tooling and process a small lady (who I'd guess to be in her late sixties) was hovering behind him, listening to his talk. Eventually she

came over and interrupted him to tell us more about the design he was showing us. Martin introduced us to the lady; this was Shelia Fleet, his mother. Richenda loves a good chat and I saw her eyes light up before she took a deep breath and began to ask questions. Shelia managed to escape after about ten minutes and Martin gave us a tour of the entire workshop. In a world where it's the norm to out-source everything to a continent with cheap labour rates, it was so nice to come across another family business whose focus was not only on the designing of a product but the crafting of it too. Shelia and her team are extraordinary crafts people and it was fascinating to bear witness to the fact that every piece of jewellery is handmade to order, from start to finish in that workshop on Orkney. As Martin walked us through the making of the jewellery he also talked us through the history, development and future plans for the business and I have to say, for us the hours we spent with Martin whizzed by. It was so generous of him to give us that time. I know Neil Thompson Boats is not on the same scale as Shelia Fleet but Shelia and Martin's business ethos and values and their connection to the natural world around them was so relatable that it felt very homely. It was also inspiring to know that there are other businesses out there, other business people like us who love what they do and work hard to do it. It's also made buying a Christmas present for Richenda very easy this year... thank you Shelia and Martin. ([www.shelifleet.com](http://www.shelifleet.com))



## NORFOLK GYPSY DEBUTS ON DAYTIME BBC

Last year we took the team of 'Escape to the Country' out on the water for a sail as part of their TV programme. This aired during the daytime schedule on 26th November and anyone wishing to view it can do so via BBC iplayer. It will be available to view for 30 days.

## EDUCATING NORFOLK



I felt very proud but also 'the pressure' when the local High School, Alderman Peel, asked if I could talk to their students about boat building as part of their STEM project. I hope they found it interesting to see how design and technology, chemistry, physics, and maths all play their part in the real world.

## FACEBOOK NOG

We've set up a Norfolk Owners Group on Facebook so that all Norfolk Range owners have a forum and platform where they can discuss and share experiences and ideas and plan events. We do hope you'll join. The name for the page is Norfolk Owners Group – The Norfolk Range.



### Norfolk Owners Group - The Norfolk Range >

PRIVATE GROUP · 18 MEMBERS



Watch party

Photos

Events

Files

## CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS

Data Tag is an electronic security system for outboard motors. Costing £40, it is a system that has been endorsed by the British Marine Federation and also the police force who have access to the database of engines registered with Datatag. Obviously no system is fool-proof but we hope that Datatag acts as a big deterrent for the criminal network targeting our harbours.

Drainman: This is a bilge pump for small dinghies and tenders that do not have batteries. The pump is triggered by the motion of the ocean and will keep your boat dry while on its mooring. It's great value, retailing at £54.

We stock both of these items so please contact us if you would like to purchase on your account.



## ALL ABOUT ENGINES

The engine trouble-shooting course mentioned in the last newsletter will take place this coming season, on Friday 29th May at 10am. It will be held here in the workshop and Neil will run through how diesel and outboard engines work, the likely problems you will come across and how to remedy them. If you would like to come then please email us and we will book you in. This event will be free of charge to existing NTB clients.

# FUEL ISSUES AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

This season has seen a rise in fuel related engine problems so we've included information from Honda which we hope you find helpful.

If you need any further help or any fuel stabilizer for your engine then please do contact us as we can provide this for you.

Do also come along to our Engine trouble shooting talk on Friday 29th of May at 10.00am to understand more (email us to book your place).

## INFORMATION ON FUEL RELATED ISSUES FROM HONDA

**What kinds of fuel to use:** Honda recommends that you use unleaded 95RON, 98RON or 95 E-10RON fuels. These can be used in all current Honda Power Equipment and ATV products.

If the Honda product is to be used on an intermittent basis (more than 4 weeks between each use) then Honda recommends that you add Honda fuel stabilizer to the fresh fuel just after purchasing. HONDA fuel stabilizer will not reconstitute stale fuel.

**How to store fuel:** Store the fuel in a clean, approved and sealed container, if you use a steel fuel can; ensure that there is no corrosion inside. Store the fuel away from direct sun light, and in a cool place.



## SCOTTISH OYSTERS

We headed off to the west coast of Scotland again this year and this time it was to Loch Hourn where we gave a good service to a Norfolk Oyster which had been taken up there 20 years previously. The boat had been looked after using traditional methods, such as rubbing boiled linseed oil into the woodwork. Initially we didn't know this and when we looked at photos of the boat before the trip we were concerned that some of the wood, the seat battens and chocks in particular, might be rotten as they were almost black and we took replacements.

However, after a good sanding all the wood was restored to its original colour and there was no trace of rot. The oil had preserved the wood beautifully. It took Richenda and I a full week to get the boat, including all of her mast and spars, stripped back, everything sanded and re-oiled, scrubbed, polished and put back together again. It was fun working in such dramatic surroundings and on a boat that is so obviously a much loved part of the family.

# 30 YEARS OF THE NORFOLK OYSTER

The first Oyster was built in 1989 and the boat has never lost its appeal. It remains a popular small classic being sailed not only here, in Norfolk, but the world over.

We were unable to hold the annual regatta this year, so instead we are getting together at 4pm on the 22nd December at the Morston Anchor Inn for a Christmas drink and to raise a toast to the Norfolk Oyster.

We hope many of you will be able to join us and we're hoping that we will be able to have a speech from Charlie Ward who remains as passionate as ever about the boat he and John Leather created.

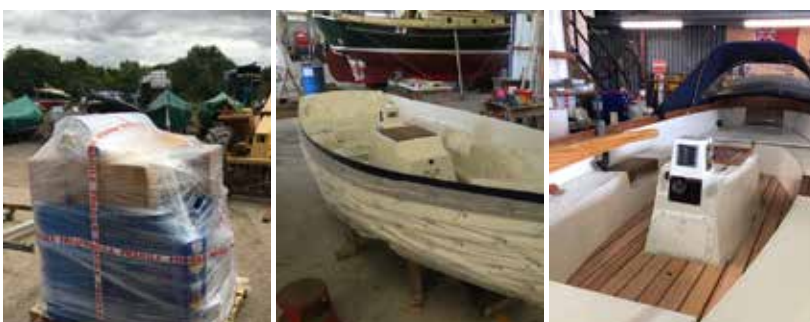


## COME & HAVE A PLAY

We're proud to be dealers for Raymarine marine electronics and we've now got a new display stand in the chandlery. You can test everything from simple depth instruments right up to the more complex multifunction displays which simulate a range of capabilities from radar to 3D imaging of the sea bed.

I'm always happy to talk through the options available and to advise on what would be right for your boat and needs.

## ANOTHER EXPLORER READY TO GO



We've just completed Explorer No. 7 and she's looking beautiful. The classic look combined with a quality build makes the Explorer a desirable boat and she really does sell herself. Boat number 7 is going to be a local boat, kept at Morston, and we're looking forward to seeing our small fleet of Explorers out there this summer.



## WE'VE A NEW BOAT IN BUILD

The Mussel. She's a classic harbour work boat at 18ft long with a Yanmar diesel engine. She's a great low maintenance boat with a strong construction that is more than capable of carrying large families and groups out into the harbour for trips to the seals or point days. The basic model starts at £23,500 (inc. vat) and there is a range of layout options that are available to suit your needs and usage.

## UNIQUE NORFOLK GYPSY FOR SALE

We have the newest built Norfolk Gypsy for sale and she is a very unique boat as her mast and gaff are constructed from carbon fibre. I have sailed 'Daisy Bell' quite a few times with her owner and have been impressed and excited by how she handles with less weight up top. Another item to note is how easy it is to hoist the main thanks to the carbon gaff. Daisy Bell is currently the only Norfolk Gypsy with this rig so if you are thinking of changing up or down within 'The Norfolk Range' to a Gypsy, this is definitely a boat to consider. Also, being only five years old and having been professionally serviced by us each winter since her build, she's in amazing condition. If you would like more info then do contact us.



## NEARLY NEW URCHIN FOR SALE

Last Year we completed building Norfolk Urchin 'Maisie'. She is a beautiful example of the Norfolk Urchin, with a blue hull, grey interior and teak trim. She is going to be going onto the market this month, and will come complete with road trailer, for £13,500 – if you would like more information on Maisie then please do contact us for more details.



## EXPLORER FOR SALE

Another road trip we made recently was to the Lake District and this was to collect Norfolk Explorer No 5 from Lake Windermere. We're going to be giving 'Herbie Two' a service and a clean up before she goes on the market – our first used Norfolk Explorer. She's only three years old and her asking price will be set for £28,000. If you would like any information on Herbie Two then please do contact us for more details.





## NEW HORIZONS FOR THE NORFOLK RANGE

This is a new boat to the Norfolk range although the Horizon is a boat with a long entwined history with Blakeney Harbour. These boats were used for several decades by the commercial mussel fisherman. At 17ft long they are incredibly stable, have a shallow draught of about 5 inches and great manoeuvrability so are easy to handle along the creeks. The Horizon is a great entry level boat to the Norfolk Range. It is powered with a Honda outboard engine and can be modified as required to be either tiller operated or remote steering. Both tiller and remote engines can come with electric start so that all you have to do is push a button and go. The layout of the boat can be crafted

to suit, with several options available from side bench seating or centre thwarts. Stowage can be built into the seating or built into the fore and aft buoyancy tanks. The boat is beamy and can easily be used for family day trips to the point with more than enough room for the dogs, picnic, beach games, fishing gear and windbreaks. The boat is built from GRP and has the best quality rubber rubbing strakes and trim so that yearly maintenance hours and costs are kept to an absolute minimum. The price for the basic boat is from £8,500 (inc.vat) and will vary on size of engine and internal layout requested.

## AUGUST RACE

Do you own a RIB or have a particularly tired looking boat that you're struggling to spruce up? Maybe you love your boat and want to keep it looking like new? If so then we have the perfect valeting products for you. August Race produces high quality maintenance products for a range of vessels from RIB's to yachts to kayaks and SUPs. We're not just promoting these products because we stock them in our chandlery but because we use them on the boats in our care and they really work. They clean gel coat and RIB tubes better than any other chemical washes that we've tested to date. They are affordable and offer great value for money too. You can see Neil demonstrating the cleaning power of the August Race Liquid RIB Cleaner on our Facebook, Instagram and twitter pages. If you do not have access to social media we will happily email you the video so that you can see the products in use.

If you would like to purchase some from our chandlery then feel free to drop in or give us a call and we can pop some in the post to you.



## HONDA HONWAVE

If you're looking for a small, robust and affordable tender to get out on the water then the Honda Honwave could be the boat for you. The starting price for the 3.2 meter T32-IE, complete with a brand new Honda BF4 short shaft engine is £2,198.00

(inc. vat). These inflatable boats are great for those looking to keep annual running costs to a minimum as they deflate and pack down into a specially designed bag for easy stowage in a shed or garage. We stock these boats and outboards and would be happy to offer all of our existing clients a discount on the retail price so please contact us for more details.





## SPRING DRINKS

Thank you to all who attended our pre-season drinks here at the yard in April of this year. It was a lovely evening and we hope that everyone who came enjoyed it. We are particularly grateful to the organisations and businesses who attended in a professional capacity. Special mention goes to The Norfolk Boat. An amazing local charity which enables young and disadvantaged people from Norfolk and the surrounding area to get offshore sail training. Thanks also to Raymarine who made a special trip to Norfolk for the evening in their mobile display van. Marine electronics is an area that is ever changing and developing so it was great to be able to see and test the next generation of equipment. On the evening our children, Archie and Grace, and Rachel's children, Ollie and Luke, were desperate to be part of the event so set up a little area in the workshop where they sold second-hand books to raise money for Blakeney primary school 'Library Fund'. Richenda, Rachel and I would like to thank everyone who purchased a book or made a donation. The cousins were thrilled to raise almost hundred pounds and we were all so proud when they presented the money to the school.

## WE TAKE OFF

Setting up for any exhibition is always a long and arduous task so we felt really good once we'd finished setting up our stand at the Holkham Show. We had a tented area with ropes, paints, engines and all kinds of chandlery goods for sale. We also had the new Horizon boat displayed in front of the marquee, along with a selection of Norfolk Range boats, Honwaves, kayaks and SUPs. Our stand looked great. We were pleased. Saturday's opening day saw good numbers and lots of people. Old faces and new popped by to say hello. It was such a lovely day that the forecasted showers for later in the afternoon were unable to dampen our spirits. As the sky darkened and we looked at the gathering mass of storm clouds in the distance we were not overly concerned. I suggested we tie everything down and we got to it but within a matter of minutes the storm broke and sent a squall of gale force winds directly at us. Our tent, and the ones belonging to the two traders next to us, took the full brunt and were completely lifted from the ground, pulling out all of the stakes and toppling over. As it lifted, the marquee pulled up the deck flooring we had laid and took all of our stock, a couple of the team members (who tried to hold onto it), Maggie our dog (who was tied to its leg post) with it and squashed me as I had been securing the back panel behind it. It was a dramatic scene and after I crawled out from under the sides and Richenda had untied Maggie, who was close to being hung, I was touched by the kindness of the other traders who rallied to help us. As the storm raged, those kind people worked with us to dismantle the tent and collect all of our stock which had been scattered by the winds. The traders next to us packed up and went home, calling time on the weekend. We got rid of the tent and stock and returned on the Sunday to focus on the boats, kayaks and SUPs and we had a really good day, chatting to everyone who came to our stand and recounting the drama from the previous day. I like to think that storm showed how we, here at Neil Thompson Boats, deal with unexpected challenges by modifying the game plan when needed, not letting the occasional bumps get us down and never quitting.



## COASTAL HIRE

During high summer we had a base down at Blakeney Quay and hired out SUP's and Kayaks for use on the tide. It was a huge success and we will be based there again during 2020 from May through to September. This will be run under the name of Coastal Hire. This sister company that Richenda and I are running will also be hiring out our Norfolk Oyster and Norfolk Gypsy for bareboat charters in the harbour (this will be subject to terms and conditions). It will be handling the mooring hire too which we are taking over from Charlie Ward. If you would like to hire a kayak, SUP, boat or mooring then please do contact us so that we can get this arranged for you.



## MOLLY

This issue of Moorings is dedicated to our much loved, and sorely missed, Molly.

A good friend and companion to us all.

Everyone here at Neil Thompson Boats wishes you a very Merry Christmas and all the best for 2020.

Please note the last day in the yard is Friday 20th and we reopen on 2nd Jan.