

HARNSER



*Magazine of the Broads Society
Friends of the Broads*

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Our Members share a common purpose to help secure a sustainable future for the Broads as a unique and protected landscape in which leisure, tourism and the local economy can thrive in harmony with the natural environment

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CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

I make no apology for reproducing some of my words from my AGM report in this letter as so much has happened these past few weeks and months.

It was my sad duty to announce the passing of our President, Robin Godber, an extraordinary man whom I looked to for advice on many occasions in my time as Chairman. He was a brilliant mentor to me. My thoughts and prayers go to Genevieve and family and I offer our condolences and support. He was renowned for his passion for the Broads, his boundless knowledge of everything boating and for his writings. He will be truly missed. We held a minutes silence before the AGM lunch.

We extended a warm welcome to our new Patron, Henry Cator whom has already started with some poignant and great ideas and suggestions for future engagement by the Society.

I was able to report that progress has been made on various issues far more in this past year. For example, the Society has had positive engagement over concerns about Broads governance with Lord Benyon, Minister of State (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) in the last month including a brief "face to face chat" in Parliament outlining these concerns, continued engagement with other Broads bodies such as the Broads Angling Services Group (BASG), a significant number of boat yards, clubs and Broads businesses.

I was also able to advise that the Northern Rivers Committee and Southern Rivers Committee will continue to meet albeit with less regular as and when required meetings looking at more parochial issues and that we will see the new Planning Committee undertake the planning scrutiny role with two of its members coming from professional planning backgrounds.

We have been continuously involved with the Broadlands Futures Initiative (BFI) again attending the Upper Thurne working group meetings where we were initially approached by BFI to perhaps assist in expanding public engagement. Sadly, no more has come of this. Our Patron and three Trustees attended a day workshop in October hosted by UTWG and presented by BFI. Frankly, it was a good workshop albeit somewhat repetitive of earlier meetings. At this workshop we were asked to undertake discussions and debate about a 100-year plan for protecting the Broads which could involve doing nothing, hard engineering, soft engineering or adapting to climate change. Whilst we should embrace what BFI is about, 100 years hence will be much different to now and personally I think that the protection of the Broads needs to start now as we are seeing more prolonged issues such as ever-increasing salt surges and prolonged flooding events.

It had been difficult in 2022 to get any real engagement with the Broads Authority, DEFRA and the EA although there have been some positive moves made by the Society to rectify this.

I advised that at the last AGM, we had agreed to declare a climate change emergency. One year hence, frankly, not much has happened and let me be blunt and say we really do need more active support from within the Society. We have until now been sparse in numbers of active committee members but the good news is that we have some new members with much needed expertise, specialisms and drive and not forgetting our new Patron Henry.

In future, trustees will be asked to undertake certain roles and responsibilities, because, for example, we have been approached by several boat yards and businesses during 2022 to help voice issues to authorities and we must help the Society continue an important role in facilitating contacts and meetings, bringing together Broads related organisations, business, residents and visitors. I announced that in 2023, we plan to organise and host a National climate change conference here on the Broads. Any organisational help would be greatly accepted.

At the AGM, I was truly humbled to be elected to continue my Chairmans duties and I will continue to endeavour to move the Societies works and aims forward. Our new Vice Chairman elect is Paul Savage who, as many of us know, has great understanding of legal issues. Di Cornell continues as our Treasurer.

I close by welcoming our new Patron Henry Cator OBE and our new Trustees Duncan Holmes, Antony Howell and Tony Lumbard, all of whom will bring a variety of expertise to the Society.

Paul Rice, Chairman

PERSONAL MEMORIES OF ROBIN GODBER

I first met Robin Godber when my husband Guy and I needed somewhere to moor our boat as we had moved to Norfolk. Guy suggested we should approach Alexander Cruisers at Brundall as he knew the Hire Boat Company was owned by Robin from the days when we had all lived in Kent. As luck would have it a mooring was available and from then on, we became firm friends with Robin and his wife Genny. We had quite a lot in common as we belonged to the Broads Society, we loved boats and we loved Norfolk and the Broads. Robin became Chairman of the Society and then became President. As Chairman he suggested that the Annual National Parks Conference should be held in the Broads and this was a great success. Robin wrote a book in 2010 entitled "A Broad Experience" (a diary of a hire fleet at the turn of the century) and I am lucky enough to have a copy. What a lovely man he was and he will be very much missed by everyone.

Jill Wickens

AGM REPORT

The AGM was held on Saturday 19th November at the Norfolk Broads Yacht Club, there were 48 people in attendance.

Paul Rice opened the meeting thanking everyone for attending.

Sadly, Paul had to impart the very sad news that the Honourable Robin Godber, President to the Broads Society, had passed away.

Paul then welcomed Henry Cator OBE as Patron to the Society.

Paul Rice then read out apologies from members who were unable to attend the AGM.

The minutes of last year's AGM were accepted, as were the reports from the Northern and Southern Rivers Committees and the Membership Report.

Diana Cornell, the Treasurer, proposed that the accounts from the previous year should be accepted, this was unanimously agreed. Di also proposed that the Debit & Credit Agency at Hoveton should be appointed as the Independent Examiner, again this was agreed. Paul Rice was re-elected as Chairman, Paul Savage as Vice-Chairman and Diana Cornell as Honorary Treasurer. The Main Committee will comprise of Keith Bacon, Diana Cornell, Colin Dye, George Elliott, Anne Filgate, Mike Filgate, Duncan Holmes, Antony Howell, Tony Lumbard, Peter Mason and Peter Smith as Chair of Publicity and Southern Rivers Committee. Paul welcomed the new Trustees.

An Honorary Solicitor has not been appointed but this will be discussed in the future.

The Chairman recognised that all members of the committees are volunteers and thanked them for the work they do. He thanked David Edleston for his work in producing Harsner, Peter Smith for attending events and promoting the Society and Paul Savage for his advice on legal matters.

Henry Cator spoke saying that he was honoured to be asked to be Patron to the Society. He is a Norfolk person and has a true love of the Broads. Henry looks forward to working with the Broads Society on a number of issues, including climate change and adaptation.

Henry Cator presented the Lady Mayhew Trophy and a cheque for £250 to Bob Sayers and Julie Russell representing the volunteers from the Museum of the Broads in recognition of the work the volunteers do at the Museum.

The Broads Society Trophy was presented to Peter Smith for all the hard work he does on behalf of the Society. Peter attends all the publicity events, is Chairman of the Southern Rivers Committee and the Publicity Committee.

David Edleston introduced the Photographic Competition which had attracted twenty-seven entries. David gave the background to the competition which had been sponsored by Nigel Hughes from YMCA Birkenhead. Henry Cator presented the David

Blair Cup, a glass trophy and cheque for £250 to David Edmund-Jones as the winner of the competition. Trevor Round came second but was sadly unable to attend the AGM. Henry then presented a glass trophy and £50 to Tony Radlett who came third. The two runners up, Holly Hancock and Caroline Baxter, will also be sent glass trophies.

The 500 Club winner number 76 was Mr G Shaw was drawn by Henry Cator.

Sarah Vergette



Henry Cator presenting the Lady Mayhew Trophy to Bob Sayers & Julie Russell on behalf of the Museum of the Broads volunteers at the AGM.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following new members who have recently joined the Society

- Mr C Maw, Swanton Abbott
- Dr & Mrs S M Holmes, Lambourn, Hungerford
- Mr R Parker, Grimsby
- Henry Cator OBE, Salhouse
- David and Stevie Edmund-Jones, Hickling
- Duncan Holmes, Salhouse
- Northern Rivers Sailing Club Limited, Corporate Member
- A R Peachment, Brundall, Corporate Member

REPORT ON THE BROADS SOCIETY MAIN COMMITTEE MEETING November 2022

Broads Charitable Trust.

Peter Howe emailed the following report.

Despite the difficult trading conditions our income from our business partners has held up well. We are able to consider awarding one or two small grants and have a couple of applications to review at our next meeting. In total, over the last 10 years or so we have awarded nearly 50 projects with a total value in excess of £100,000. We have strengthened our relationship with Visit the Broads and are hoping to benefit from increased exposure of our activities in the business community. Visit the Broads have produced a new Norfolk Broads app and we have negotiated a strong presence for Love the Broads which will be incorporated in the next update. The Discovery Hub project continues to develop well. As previously reported, we have the funding for Hubs at Beccles Quay, Salhouse Broad and Yarmouth Sea Front. We are working to complete construction of these next April and will shortly be starting a PR campaign to launch the whole project.

There was some discussion regarding attendance at the Royal Norfolk Show in 2023, possibly sharing a stand with Love the Broads. Di asked if it would be better to attend smaller, local events as the Royal Norfolk Show did not produce much interest & no new members.

CNP

Peter Smith and Paul Savage attended the CNP Conference in October. Paul reported that The Lakes don't persuade the powers that be to do the right thing, they do it themselves. They have put money into a local housing project which has attracted large companies to invest. He went on to say that climate adaptation attracts money. The Broads Society should give this some thought. Peter Smith stated that the other societies have better contact with their local authorities, for example Friends of Snowdonia weekly meetings. It was noted that the BA are leaving National Parks England along with Exmoor. Henry Cator stated that the Broads is on the front-line for climate adaptation, the Tyndall Centre at UEA is the centre for climate change.

Northern & Southern Rivers Committees

There had been previous discussion relating to a new Planning Committee and this had been agreed. The Majority of the Southern Rivers Committee and three members of Northern Rivers Committee had opted to join the Planning Committee. It was agreed that the Northern and Southern Rivers Committees would remain and, except for an Annual Meeting, would meet as and when necessary. The current system for reviewing planning applications works well. The first meeting of the Planning Committee will be held on 30th November jointly with Southern Rivers Committee. A chair will be elected at this meeting.

Live Aboards

Di raised this issue as there had been problems with live aboards at Potter Heigham. Broads police were dealing with the issues and had stated that there were 62 live aboards on the system. This impacts on visitors to the area. The residents of the five live aboards at Potter Heigham had been abusive to holiday makers, effluent is being emptied into the dykes. Paul Savage stated that in the Local Plan revision documents will include comments from organisations and public, all material then goes to the Planning Inspector, with response from the Authority, for approval (they can refuse). Questions 43 and 44 relate to residential moorings and live aboards/gipsies and some of the information is incorrect. Keith stated that it is right to separate residential moorings and live aboards. Live aboards are not a planning issue, they are a navigation problem as they are obstructing the navigation. Residential moorings come under planning. The BA are not a housing authority. District have the responsibility, for Potter Heigham, for housing and deal with travellers and those with a nomadic lifestyle. Paul Rice stated that this problem needs to be looked into in more depth. A multi-agency approach is needed. It was agreed that Paul Rice and Paul Savage would draft a letter for circulation to the Trustees which would be sent to the BA, police etc. and the MP copied in.

British Marine Federation

George reported that in August the British Marine Federation asked him to sign up, this was becoming mandatory. All boatyards will be obliged to join the BMF but he suggested this will impinge on boatyard activities. This has come about as a result of the investigations by MAIB into the accident on the Broads in 2020. The Broads are not regulated enough. The Broads Society has been approached by several of the local boatyards to look into this. Di stated that over the last few years there have been many people using the Broads that have never been on a boat before, they don't know how to handle large cruisers which are growing in size, this is very dangerous. Keith stated that something needs to be done with regard to safety and regulation. This is the BA's job but they appear to have passed the responsibility onto the BMF. Paul Rice stated that more research is needed into the matter and it will be discussed again at the next meeting. Engagement with the boatyards is needed.

Avian Flu & Salt Surge

Paul Rice reported that Broadswatch has become a limited company and will form a CIC. He and Trustee Duncan Holmes are a director so interests were declared. Broadswatch called a meeting to discuss Avian Flu, circa two hundred swans have died on three Northern rivers. Many fish were lost due to the salt surge and the inaction of the EA. The authorities are being urged to look at third sector involvement with Broadswatch getting many calls but a waste carrier licence is needed to move dead birds. The District Council has not given guidance on how to proceed. Incineration is best way but the nearest approved incinerator is many miles away at Royston. A letter has been sent to Therese Coffey MP proposing that the third sector gets involved and can deal with situations. All the organisations involved have or will undergo various

training. A response is awaited. Options are being investigated with regard to salt surges, one option is a bubble curtain which can be deployed by the third sector organisations.

Finance

An update on the financial position had been circulated and was noted.

Any Other Business

Keith stated that the Broads Plan, not be confused with the Broads Local Plan. covers the whole of the Broads, the BA is the author and key participant and is working in partnership with other bodies. They hope to get joint grant funding.

There is a joint project with Norfolk County Council and the BA for the three mills near How Hill, this will expand into a wider heritage skills project.


Paul Savage asked for the response from Lord Benyon to the Society be circulated. Lord Benyon is committed to publishing the response to the last consultation on Glover and implement recommendations as soon as possible. He also reported that the Vice-Chair of the NSBA would like to bring his sailing club at Upton in as a corporate member to the Society.

George stated that with regard to the recent floods the Government has issued notices on how floods come about but there had been no flood warning for recent events. The telemetry readings are incorrect, there is no fluctuation and no movement (the Potter Heigham site at Repps is adjacent to the marsh pump outfall). Many sites for the readings are not in the right places, they should be on the main rivers. Paul Rice and George (as Senior Flood Wardens) installed the flood barrier last week at Herbert Woods car park at Potter Heigham. Flooding will be an agenda item at the next meeting.

Henry stated that the Society should consider holding a conference on Climate change.

Peter Smith stated that the BA have put out several things on social media recently, trying to encourage people to get involved.

Paul Rice, Chairman



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BROADS SOCIETY PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION 2022

The competition was sponsored by Nigel Hughes which included cash prizes for first, second and third places along with the David Blair Trophy for the overall winner. The competition was revived in 2022 having previously been run in 2013 and 2014 and the background history to setting up of the David Blair Trophy was published in the April 2022 edition of Harnser.

For the 2022 competition, entries were invited in two categories which included 'People and the Broads', an image with the central feature being a person or people, illustrating human life in the Broads and 'Broads Landscapes', a photograph capturing the distinctive character and unique atmosphere of the Broads.

The prizes included £250 for first place, £100 for second place and £50 for third place along with an engraved glass trophy for each winner. A prize of £50 was also offered for the best entry from those under 18. A total of 27 entries were received, but unfortunately there were no entries from under 18s. The judging panel included Henry Cator, Martin Thirkettle and David Edleston who assessed the submissions on their creativity, composition and technical qualities and how well they satisfied the criteria set out for each of the two categories and a shortlist of 5 entries was drawn up. The judges were unanimous in their decision to award the first prize and the David Blair Trophy to David Edmund-Jones for his image 'Norfolk Punt Racing on the Edge!', which captured a sharp and well composed image of extreme sailing on the River Thurne. The second prize was awarded to Trevor Round for his photo 'Loading the Pig' with reed and third prize to Tony Radlett for his atmospheric shot 'Surlingham Morning'. Runner up prizes of a glass engraved trophy were also offered to Caroline Baxter and Holly Hancock. Prizes were presented to those who were available to attend the AGM by Henry Cator.

The Society is extremely grateful for the very generous sponsorship of the competition by Nigel Hughes.



Henry Cator presenting the 1st prize and the David Blair Trophy to David Edmund-Jones and the 3rd prize to Tony Radlett at the AGM.

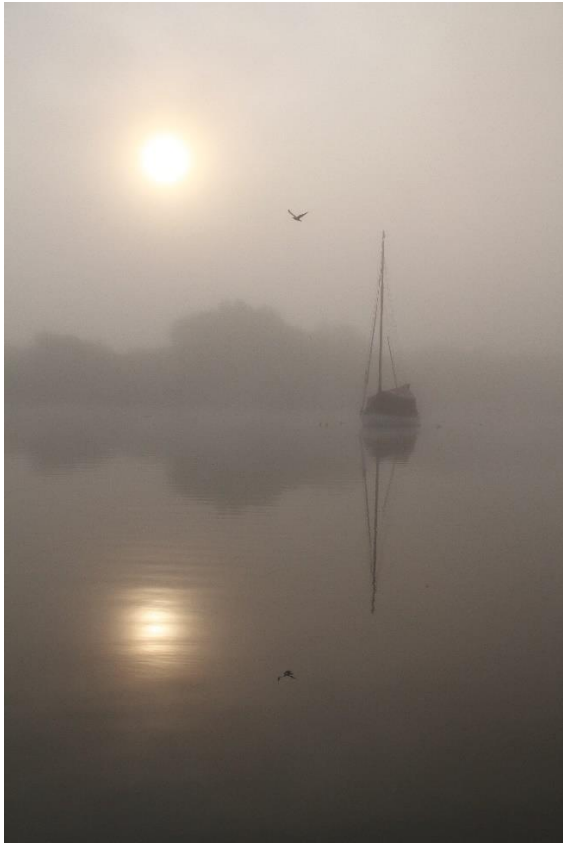
Broads Society Photographic Competition 2022 : Winning Entries



1st Prize 'Norfolk Punt Racing on the Edge!' © David Edmund-Jones



2nd Prize 'Loading the Pig' © Trevor Round



3rd Prize 'Surlingham Morning' © Tony Radlett; Runner Up 'Ominous Clouds at Thurne Mill' © Caroline Baker



Runner Up 'Dusk at Turf Fen Mill' © Holly Hancock

BYGONE MEMORIES OF POTTER HEIGHAM

The following article written by Philip J Chapman, was first published in the October 2022 edition of Suffolk Norfolk Life Magazine. We are very grateful to Kevin Davis, editor of the magazine, who has kindly given permission for the article to be published in Harnser, being of interest to Broads Society members.

It was a pleasure to research this village as in the 1950's I spent many a happy hour fishing near the bridge which seemed a magnet to me as a good net full of roach and bream could be achieved. However, today we are looking at the period 1905 to about 1915 and a description of the village at that time is required. This is done by quoting from the 1912 edition of Kelly's Post Office Directory that states – "*Potter Heigham is a parish and village with a station on the Midland and Great Northern joint railway, 11 miles north-west from Yarmouth and 15 north-east from Norwich, in the Eastern division of the county, (Norfolk) Tunstead and Happing hundred, Smallburgh union, Great Yarmouth county court district, rural deanery of Waxham (Happing division) and archdeaconry and diocese of Norwich*". These facts are of little use in the 21st century but the mileages remain the same! One of my hobbies is collecting the images that were captured by Edwardian and early 20th century photographers, and published on picture postcards. It was also a hobby of thousands of people, in those days who sent such cards to each other to make up vast collections. It was this collecting hobby that allows us, in the 21st century, to seek out these cards as millions are still in evidence today via postcard fairs and the internet. I am, therefore, able to share with readers several bygone images of Potter Heigham to illustrate scenes and a way of life long gone!



1 : St Nicholas Church, Potter Heigham 2 : Potter Heigham Church interior

We begin our bygone 'tour' with a postcard entitled "*St. Nicholas Church, Potter Heigham*" (1) circa 1908, which would, I am sure, been one of the first places our ancestors or visitors to the village would have visited. The exterior of a church mainly remains the same but the interior may have changed over the last 100 years. This is depicted on my next card merely titled "*Potter Heigham Church*" (2) showing the interior of the building at a similar date to the first card. Here we can see how the church lighting was provided by oil lamps, three of which on view are attached to pillars, whilst two can be seen hanging. I presume it was the church warden or other

helpers who were responsible for keeping these lamps topped up with paraffin which must have been a time consuming job.

The 1912 directory, mentioned previously, gives us more information about the church as it states “*The church of St. Nicholas is a build of flint in the Gothic style, consisting of chancel, clerestoried nave of four bays, aisles and a round western tower with an embattled octagonal belfry stage containing 2 bells. The church was partly restored in 1875 at a cost of about £600: in 1895 the east window was restored, the floor relaid and the roof and porch restored at a further cost of £50.*” It is descriptions such as this that help us, in the 21st century, to appreciate how these ancient buildings were constructed and maintained for future generations. The directory also informs us that the vicar in 1912 was Rev. Lewis Meadows White M.A., of Trinity College, Cambridge, who was also the vicar of Repps with Bastwick.



3 : Station and Post Office, Potter Heigham 4 : Post Office, Potter Heigham

My opening quote mention the railway and it is therefore to introduce my next postcard that is entitled “*Station and Post Office, Potter Heigham*”. (3) This shows us the station building to the right of the photograph, with the post office in the background which we will see in more detail later. This card, from about 1912, gives us an impression how the station appeared to our ancestors and to visitors to the village. In 1912 the Station Master was John Francis who, I expect had signalmen and porters to assist him. This type of card is, of course, of historical value as rail lines of this nature disappeared later in the century.

The “*Post Office, Potter Heigham*” (4) can be viewed more clearly on my next postcard, circa 1910, with the station in the background. The 1912 directory informs us “*Post, M.O. & T. Office – Samuel Pollard, sub-postmaster. Letters through Great Yarmouth; deliveries commence at 7.45a.m & 2.30p.m. for callers; dispatched at 10.30a.m. & 12.50 & 6p.m.; letters arrive on Sundays at 7.40a.m. for callers*”. With the help of that information, I can just about see the Pollard name above the doorway! The Edwardian photographer has arranged for a horse and cart, with handler, to pose and a lady is standing in the doorway; was this Mrs Pollard? Residents in those early days had a wonderful service and could even collect their mail on a Sunday!

Our bygone ‘tour’ continues with a postcard bearing the title “*Falgate Corner, Potter Heigham*” (5) which, not only, shows us a wonderful street scene, circa 1910, but also

the local hostelry, the Falgate Inn. A horse and cart is tethered to a post outside, was a delivery being made or was the driver quenching his thirst? The internet site www.norfolkpubs.co.uk informs us that the landlord from 1908 to 1912 was William Shepard George and this is confirmed by the 1912 directory where the entry reads “George, Wm. Shepherd, Falgate Inn”; was the directory compiler or the pub record correct about the correct spelling of the Christian name? We will never know! However, this card does not show us where our ancestors or visitors may have stayed if they wanted to prolong their visit to the village. I am pleased to say visitors can still visit this establishment as it is ‘alive and well’ in the 21st century!



5 : Falgate Corner, Potter Heigham



6 : Church Road, Potter Heigham

It is time that we ‘visited’ other parts of this charming village and my next two postcards illustrate how rural it was in the early part of the 20th century. The first card bears the title “Church Road, Potter Heigham” circa 1905 (6) showing a horse and cart waiting outside, what looks like, a farm building opposite a large pond. The rough road was built for this type of transport and not for the age of the motor car that was about to appear in numbers during the next few years. This is a very tranquil scene which the Edwardian photographer has captured for posterity which cannot be repeated today. The second card is merely entitled “Potter Heigham” (7) but reflects the same rural scene with the only animation being another horse and trap that the photographer has carefully posed in centre shot. With the aid of a magnifying glass two ladies can be seen sitting in the trap and, no doubt, the photographer was guaranteed the sale of at least two postcards! Perhaps a local reader will be able to name this road. This is a charming card from the same period as the first.

The next postcard is interesting inasmuch that it portrays the occupation of one of the inhabitants of the village in about 1908. It is entitled “Norfolk Broads, Eel Fisher’s Hut, Heigham Sound”. (8) It shows the Eel Catcher himself sitting aboard his ‘houseboat’ that is draped with nets of his trade. I can vouch for eels in these waters as, when fishing for perch, with a worm as bait, many were caught which was annoying, as my tackle ended up in a slimy, tangled state! I understand that eels are a lot scarcer in the 21st century and may become an endangered species.

An important part of life in the early part of the 20th century was the local shops and my next postcard entitled “The Stores, Potter Heigham” (9) shows us a good example of a shop in about 1912. James Watts was a Grocer and Draper with a substantial

shop that appears well stocked; was it Mrs Watts standing in the doorway? This is a wonderful card for collectors and local historians.



7 : Potter Heigham



8 : Eel Fisher's Hut, Heigham Sound



9 : The Stores, Potter Heigham



10 : Bridge Hotel

We conclude our bygone 'tour' with the help of postcards, by 'visiting' the "*Bridge Hotel*" (10) with a card from a slightly later date of about 1914. Potter Heigham, from the start of the 20th century, had become a pleasure playground with the waterside being the great attraction with the Bridge Hotel being a tourist hotspot. Here we see at least two early motor cars pulled up at the side of the hotel where, no doubt, the missing occupants were staying. Someone is casting off a rowing boat in the foreground whilst other onlookers are seen in the background. The entry for this hotel in the 1912 directory reads "*Smith, Harry, motor, sailing & rowing boats for hire, Bridge Hotel*". This is a scene from over 100 years ago that was recorded for posterity which is fortunate as the hotel was destroyed by fire in September 1990 and not rebuilt.

I hope these postcard, facts and figures have helped readers appreciate how the villages appeared to our ancestors all those years ago.

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NEWS FROM THE BROADS ANGLING SERVICES GROUP



Broads Angling Services Group

What I wrote 12 months ago in Hanser is again very topical, The COP27 outcomes just highlights the challenges facing the Broads from a rising North Sea and the damage that salinity ingress has on the Northern Broads as was clearly seen by all this last September.



The map left shows the level of saline ingress impacting some 35kms with many images of dead fish and molluscs all over the impacted area shown in red. We published this map, based on a host of material provided by our volunteers from taking salinity readings to the imagery of its impact. Whilst the agency continues to state it's a natural occurrence and not much more could be achieved within their resources.

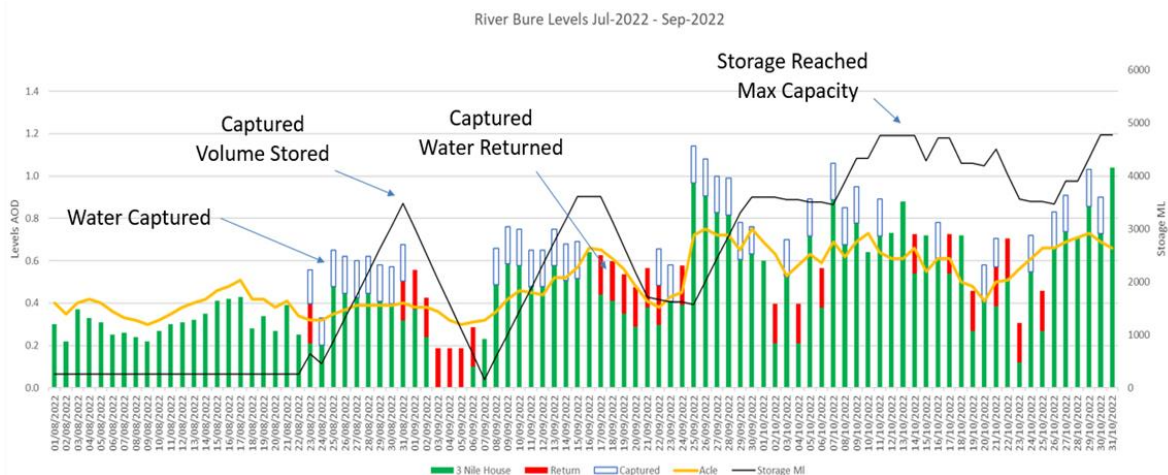
We feel this is a wakeup call and like many others don't believe we can just sit and watch this happen around us without taking some action.

We have met the senior managers of the EA and expressed our concerns over their ability to manage such events in the future. This has resulted in a set of actions to explore how 3rd sector volunteer groups could help, but also to agree what should be the service level needed to sustain any fishery service within the Broads and further afield.

These engagements will provide additional resources to assist with both reactive and proactive management, but won't stop the underlying issue of a rising North Sea and the impact of climate change, but just manage the resultant impact. Therefore, some form of defence is needed now, whilst further work is undertaken on modelling the long term future for the Broads. This got me thinking (which is always dangerous) about could we find a defensive solution in the short to medium term.

Back on 2015 a Dutch consultancy firm Deltares were contracted by the Agency to look at saline incursions in the Broads and potential solutions in its management. A range of defensive mechanisms were explored including barriers and air curtains, but also the use of salt marsh to buffer the incoming tidal surge, as it once did some 400 years previously before we reclaimed the land for grazing.

During 2021 I spent many hours modelling fenland river flows to see if enough water was available to support the plans for a Fenland Reservoir, so I had developed some tools to model river flows and storage. Following the September Broads issues, I applied the same logic to the river Bure and could easily identify periods of tidal locking resulting in saline incursion. The question was could through introducing some limited storage cap the influx of any tidal ingress. The answer is yes this desktop model shows a positive result, but it would require some sizable storage capacity of circa 250 hectares. The plot below shows a typical daily output from the model.



During November we have started to share this across a wide set of policy makers, asking the question, could this become some form of an early adaptation scheme for the Northern Broads. Losing 250 hectares of low value grazing marsh to save the 5000+ hectares of upstream freshwater habitat, must be something to consider.

What this then exposes is the old issue of Broads governance and who would drive such a proposal, leave it to Broads Futures and on current thinking its not until 2025 would any policy be available from their hydrological models, which are looking at long term impacts and strategy, 50-100 years out.

So should a twin track approach be adopted, one which provides some limited protection for the next 3 decades, whilst we await for the long term future to be understood and all that comes with it. But the question remains who would take this on?

We have continued to build a sound partnership with Natural England, despite our previous legal challenges over Hoveton Great Broad. Which their plans to implement fish barriers have been quietly abandoned recently. As I write this, there is some hope they will look further at salinity issues, securing some 5000+ hectares of protected Freshwater Broads Habitat.

The question and challenge for 2023 is whose role is it to manage any adaption, sustaining the existing Broads future whilst we await the long term strategy and all that comes with it.

Kelvin Allen, Chairman BASG CIC

THE MERCHANT NAVY ASSOCIATION BOAT CLUB

AGMs are boring aren't they?

Normally the only way to get club members to attend an AGM is to catch them off-guard with a comment like "well I'll see you at the AGM then" before they've had time to think up a plausible excuse for not attending....

So how were we to encourage a reasonable attendance at our first proper AGM since before the Covid pandemic?

The Merchant Navy Association Boat Club has some two hundred plus members scattered throughout the UK so the first obstacle is the question of a venue that suits at least a sizeable slice of the membership and then devise a format for the event that might be of interest, hopefully enjoyable and dare I say it, even good fun!

If one has to travel two hours to and from a meeting it means, effectively, that it's taking up a whole day. If you have to travel even further it probably means an overnight stay. Frankly who would want to spend the time and money for a two-day round trip simply to attend a formal meeting? Hence, our plan for the Boat Club's 2022 AGM morphed into one for a two-day potentially interesting and enjoyable "event" with less than one hour of the two days dedicated to the formal Annual General Meeting.

Given that the MNA Boat Club has quite a high proportion of its membership living in or near to East Anglia and that we also have a very worthwhile "partnership" with the Norfolk & Suffolk Boating Association (NSBA) to promote our "WaterWatch" safety & surveillance initiative, we decided that a series of events on the Norfolk Broads would be an attractive proposition and so it proved to be, with the bonus of all-time record AGM attendance!

After much deliberation the following events were agreed:

- a visit to the fascinating Museum of the Broads
- a half-day cruise on the famous Norfolk Wherry the "Albion"
- a further half-day cruise on several of our own local members boats

We obviously needed to make sure that there would be enough accommodation available near the venue at what, in early September, would still be a busy time with many holidaymakers around.

We were very fortunate in making contact with three very pleasant and comfortable guest houses within 50 metres of the venue for the AGM in the village of Neatishead, where we had booked the mezzanine floor of the White Horse Inn for the meeting and an evening meal afterwards





Our programme kicked off at 11.00 am on the morning of Tuesday 6th September with the visit to the Museum of the Broads which proved hugely interesting and enjoyable especially thanks to our being given a fascinating tour conducted by Bob a very knowledgeable and enthusiastic member of the museum volunteer team.

Given that many of our members attending are former professional seafarers, we were particularly interested in the old WW2 airborne lifeboat on display (one of the very few still in existence). One of our members was even able to provide a hitherto unrecorded local story about one of them.



Moving on to the late afternoon and evening, having got through the AGM in good time, our members and guests proceeded to enjoy some excellent food from the White Horse's extensive menu, including their own local "pie of the day".

The following morning dawned fine but storms were forecast for the afternoon. Most of the members had elected to spend the morning (or in a few cases the whole day) on the wherry "Albion" sailing from

her base at Womack Water on the River Thurne to Horning on the River Bure.

The afternoon was to be spent on one of our local members' boats exploring the River Ant and Barton Broad. Hence, everyone was aboard either the "Albion" or Richard Card's "Ness Nomad" or Clive Edwards' "Elsa II" by 09.00 at the start of what was to be an enjoyable and for some a surprisingly eventful day on the water!



Those aboard Ness Nomad and Elsa II were able to get a good view of Barton Broad and the River Ant as well as a short side-trip to Malthouse Broad with views of Ranworth Church known locally as the "Cathedral of The Broads"

We had planned to all rendezvous at the Swan Hotel at Horning but unfortunately the mooring for the Albion was already occupied so she had to moor alongside the opposite bank whilst Ness Nomad and Elsa II were able to moor at Horning Sailing



Club where Clive is a member. With the aid of Albion's tender, we then had to ferry members back and forth during a brief break for a sandwich lunch so that those who had spent the morning on Ness Nomad and Elsa II, including MNA President Vivien Foster OBE, were able to make the homeward passage on the Albion whilst some of those who'd been on the Albion during the morning transferred to Ness Nomad and Elsa II for the homeward leg via

the River Ant and Barton Broad.

So far so good, although sadly our Vice Commodore Paul and his wife Tracey had to depart by taxi and car to attend a medical emergency back in Essex (happily turning out not to be as serious as first thought).

Up to now the weather had been perfect and seemed set fair for the afternoon despite the previous warning of storms. Everyone set off from Horning in ideal conditions for what was mostly a leisurely and peaceful sail home - I say "mostly" because two-thirds of the way into the return journey all three vessels (and Paul & Tracey's open-top car!) were hit



by a series of seriously violent squalls, thunder and lightning and absolutely torrential rain that reduced visibility to about 50 metres! As both Ness Nomad and Elsa II are motor cruisers all we had to do was reduce speed for about fifteen minutes until the storm had gone through but the situation on the Albion was significantly more dramatic and is the subject of a separate report by one of our members, David Cornes, who was on-board at the time, along with others including our President Vivien.

Clive Edwards, Commodore MNA Boat Club



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ALBION ADVENTURE



I was very happy to attend the MNA Boat Club AGM in September 2022 at the little Norfolk Broads village of Neatishead. The following day I was able to take part in an event associated with the AGM – a day out on the Broads on the ‘Albion’. The ‘Albion’ is one of two surviving Norfolk Wherries, and the only one currently sailing. She is owned and operated by the Norfolk Wherry Trust who purchased her in 1949 in order to preserve her as an example of the Norfolk Wherry, the sailing barges who served the Norfolk Broads and were specifically adapted to the conditions prevailing there. ‘Albion’ is now 125 years old; some 65 feet overall and able to carry up to 40 tons of cargo. She is maintained in first class condition by the Trust and is operated by a team of volunteers and is funded mainly by passenger charters, one of which I joined.

I joined her at the Trust base at Womack near Ludham with some other Boat Club members– fortunately my Sat-Nav was able to find the location - and after a safety briefing and issue of lifejackets the ‘Albion’ got under way. We left our jackets etc. in the hold as it looked as though we were in for a warm, shirt sleeves rig day, the hold also contains a toilet and a cooker and plenty of seating. ‘Albion’ is berthed in a little dock on the River Thurne. She has no engine but power is supplied by a dinghy with an outboard lashed to one quarter with a fender between. The outboard is usually operated by the Mate, who jumps into the dinghy to change the throttle setting when required. Security is maintained by a red safety line attached to the ‘Kill Cord’ and fastened on Albion’s quarter. We set off down the River Thurne with this method and set the sail.

Perhaps a word about the ‘Albion’s unique rig might be useful at this point. The mast is unstayed, apart from a forestay, there is no other ‘Standing Rigging’. The mast is therefore a very substantial spar. It is stepped in an equally substantial Tabernacle at the fore end of the hatch and the foot is furnished with a very substantial

counterweight, which rises up through the foredeck via a hatchway when the mast is lowered, by slackening the forestay purchase. The single sail is suspended from a very substantial gaff, which extends the sail such that the leach is practically vertical. The halyard system is unique to the Norfolk Wherry. All other vessels with gaff sails have two sets of halyards, one for the Throat and one for the Peak. The wherry has one halyard which leads up from the deck through a double block at the mast head, through a single block at the throat of the gaff, back to the masthead block, down to a block with a span attached to a couple of points on the gaff, and leads up to and is finally made fast to the masthead block. The sail is then hoisted by the halyard led to a geared winch at the fore side of the mast. The sail was actually hoisted on this occasion by myself and another Boat Club member, and it was not a very heavy job.

We sailed down the Thurne and then ascended the River Bure. The conditions were a mainly cloudy day with light winds, often diminished and diverted by vegetation on the banks and thus were able to experience every point of sailing many times, and in rapid succession! 'Albion' tacked and gybed as necessary with little fuss, assisted by the dinghy outboard, when necessary, the throttle operated by the Mate who jumped into the dinghy from his normal position by the little knee-high 'cockpit' at the after end of the hatch from where he also tended the mainsheet, cleated on the after end of the coaming, where necessary.

We arrived at Horning which was our lunch stop, and where some of the passengers departed and our MNA President, Vivien Foster OBE, joined us for the return trip. I had elected to stay on board 'Albion' for the whole day as being a unique experience, not to be missed. I was offered a spell at the helm which I enthusiastically accepted. She is steered by a very large rudder, some six feet in length, which is controlled by a substantial tiller operated from the little knee-high cockpit which also leads by a further step down into a little cuddy, crew accommodation when she was working. The only helm order I was given was 'Keep her in the middle', which I endeavoured to do. Not surprisingly she takes a little while to respond to her helm, and a bit of anticipation as to when to take helm off is required, she certainly is not hard to steer in those conditions.

We noticed some black rain clouds creeping across the Broads to one side of us but thought that they would probably pass astern, so we continued to sail in our shirt-sleeve rig. Most other traffic has given us right-of-way up to this point indeed, the Skipper had told us that we had precedence over most other traffic on the Broads, however at this moment a charter sailing yacht crossed our bows and then tacked back, putting her on a collision course. The Skipper ordered the helm over and told the Mate to let go the Mainsheet to depower the sail. As she started to respond we were suddenly engulfed in a heavy rainstorm with a heavy gust of wind; with which, with the helm already over and the mainsail running out to right-angles, 'Albion' headed for the reeds along the bank, where she remained pressed to the bank. The mainsheet continued to run out and unrove and the sail, with no Standing Rigging to inhibit it, continued around to the fore side of the mast. The downpour continued and

all hands, including Vivien our President sitting on the foredeck, were drenched to the skin by this time!

The Skipper suggested that I step into the Cuddy, I don't think that this was in consideration for my welfare, as we were all soaked to the skin by this time! As well as himself and the Mate there was also a Trainee Skipper and a Trainee Mate on board and I am sure that he decided that he needed experienced hands at a time like that. I might therefore be slightly adrift as to the sequence of events following. The squall had eased and the first task was to re-reeve the mainsheet and get the sail back abaft the mast, the sail was then lowered onto the deck and the task of getting her off the bank was commenced. This was accomplished by the use of the dinghy with its outboard and the use of the 'Quants'; long poles with a fork on the bottom and a shoulder button on the top used to pole the vessel in the way that a punt is propelled by punt poles.

Once 'Albion' was under way, with propulsion provided by the dinghy, it was noticed that there were lightning flashes visible close by. Standing Orders are; that in the event of lightning, the mast is to be lowered, so the forestay purchase was slackened off and down came the mast to join the gaff and sail on top of the hatch.

It was then time to get below and remove my sodden shirt. A kind member of the crew kindly loaned me a dry tee shirt to wear under my waterproof jacket, now perhaps a bit superfluous! When I returned it when we docked it was sopping wet below the waist where it had been in contact with my wet trousers!

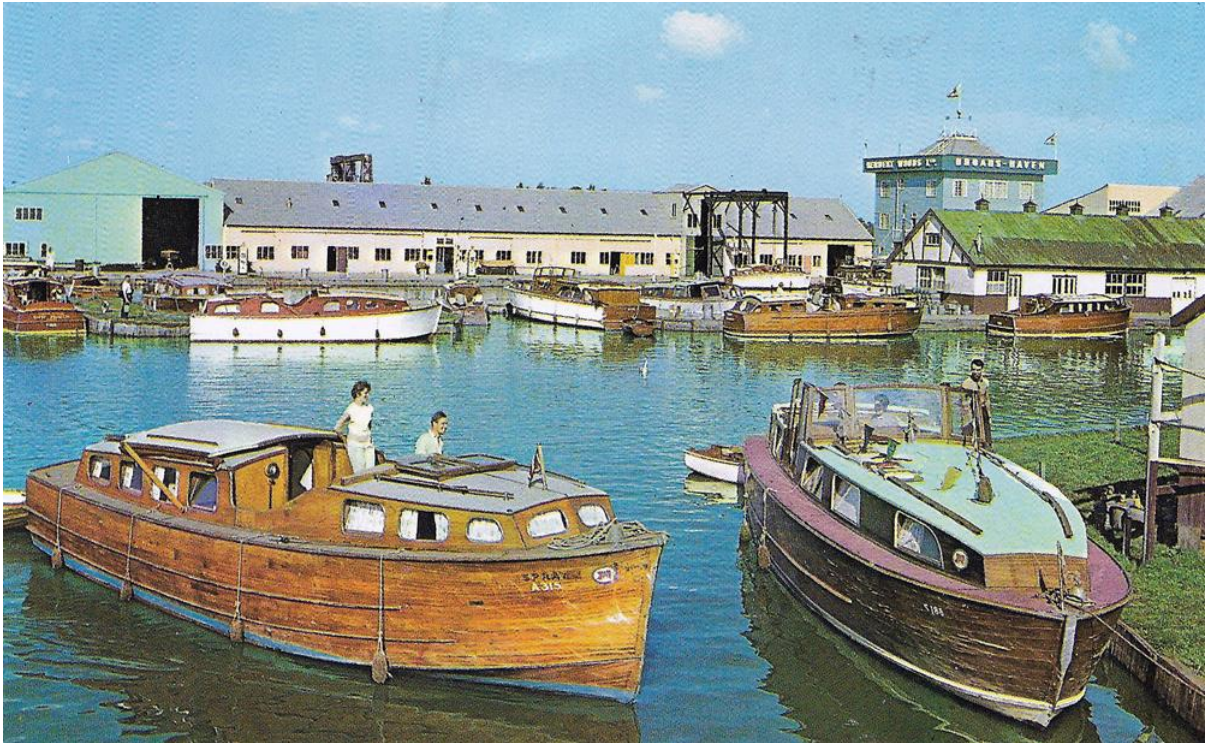
I did have the temerity to ask the Skipper, trying not to teach granny to suck eggs, whether it would not be useful to have a figure-of-eight knot on the end of the Mainsheet. He replied that they had given some consideration to this very point and had decided that; in the event of having to let go the mainsheet for any reason, it was better for the sail, unencumbered by any Standing Rigging, to go forward of the mast to de-power it. I have to admit that this made good sense.

Thus, we returned under power to our dock, where we helped to turn her and back her in to her usual berth. So ended a very interesting and enjoyable day, enlivened by a bit of excitement!

I was most interested to learn more about this unique sailing craft, evolved to satisfy the local conditions on the Broads which I had only read about before. I knew something about the evolution, equipment and handling of the other classic British sailing barge, the Thames 'Spritty', of which there are many surviving still, but I can only applaud the efforts of the Norfolk Wherry Trust in maintaining and operating this almost unique example – there is another partly restored privately owned wherry in the Trust's dock, but she is not rigged at present.

David Cornes

THEN AND NOW Herbert Woods Boatyard, Potter Heigham



The top postcard image, © Colourpicture Publishers, Norwich, shows Herbert Woods Broads Haven yard in the early 1960s, from the footbridge over the entrance into the mooring basin from the River Thurne. Today, apart from the modern hire fleet and the reconfiguration of the boatsheds in the background, the view remains recognisable.

NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM OF THE BROADS



At the time of writing this article for 'Harnser' it is still November (just!) But it doesn't feel like it – the weather has been and continues to be exceptionally mild. The museum doors are now firmly closed, the steamboat 'Falcon' is inside our 'Oulton' building and work has already started on annual maintenance. Many other exciting developments are planned including a brand new annual exhibition which promises to be of real interest to many.

More news on this in the next issue.

Soon after we closed at the end of October, we held our volunteers' 'thank you' lunch. This year on board the Mississippi riverboat 'Southern Comfort' from Horning. We cruised in rather chilly weather down to St Benet's Abbey and back, with lunch served on the way. It was a change from our usual venue but seems to have been greatly enjoyed by all. Thank you to the crew of the boat for making our day special.



Volunteers lunch on board 'Southern Comfort'

On the following day, I attended the Broads Society AGM in glorious sunshine at the Norfolk Broads Yacht club at Wroxham Broad. I was delighted to see that the Lady Mayhew trophy had been awarded to our wonderful volunteers for the efforts they made this year in welcoming schools and young people to 'explore' the Broads and learn more about their environment. Bob Sayers and Julie Russell attended to accept the award presented by Society Patron, Henry Cator.

Back a few weeks, and In early October, the museum hosted a visit by the Broads Authority with members of CANAPE (Creating a New Approach to Peatland Ecosystems) – a project to restore peatlands, develop new peatland products and bring economic benefits. Both our trip boats were used to collect members from How Hill and bring them to the museum for a quick tour. The group of about 25 included members from Belgium, Germany and Denmark. I learnt a lot about peat and its value today. It is a fascinating project and so relevant today when climate adaptation is so pressing.

So lots happening at Stalham Staithe and in a blink of an eye, it will be time to open to visitors once more - it's all hands to the pumps now!

As usual, I appeal for more potential volunteers to join us – it is rewarding work in lovely surroundings so do please take a look at our website where you will find all there is to know about the museum and an application form.

www.museumofthebroads.org.uk

It is too late to wish you a merry Christmas but I *am* able to wish you a happy, healthy and peaceful New Year!

Robert Paul, Chair of Trustees

WHEATFEN NATURE RESERVE

The Ted Ellis Trust



I felt sick. It was the kind of sickness that only the soul of a tormented angler is subject to, the kind that can become overwhelming on losing a large fish after battling it on rod and line for many adrenaline-filled minutes. But this time I didn't even have a rod. All I could do was stare at the three, hefty mullet that idly cruised through Wheatfen's waterways. Oh, how I wished to gently flick a baited hook in their direction.

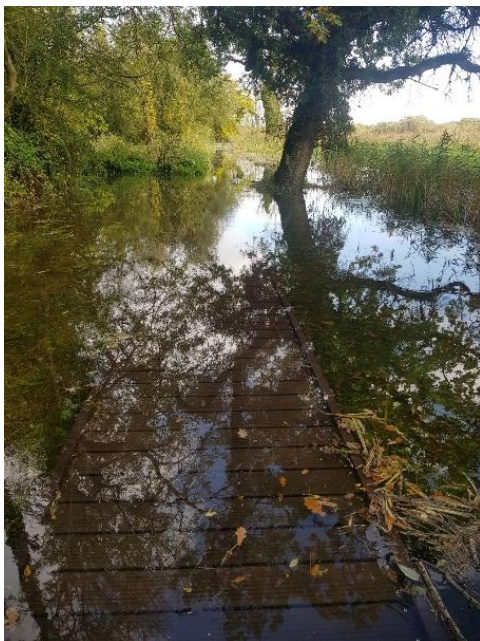
Across the county, a summer of drought and intense heat had greedily drank the water of many shallow ponds, leaving nothing but baked, cracked mud. The expression of the season from the Norfolk denizens was "blast, it's hoomid bor!". At Wheatfen, the freshwater tidal dykes and broads had ebbed and flowed as ever. Depleted of their usual life giving, oxygenated rainwater that freshens up the Broads over the summer months, I was surprised to still record average water levels for the season. We could even still boast of the occasional flood. The reserve was green and lush as seemingly the rest of Norfolk baked, burnt, and frazzled. But then I saw the mullet; a coastal fish tolerant of brackish, stagnant water. An hour later I plunged my salinity meter into the depths of our freshwater oasis.

The threat of salt incursions into the Yare Valley normally begins to gnaw at the mind of a warden with the donning of a threadbare, waxed jacket come the Autumn. Eventually, after a long winter of hard graft and fen management, feeling like I have aged another decade we re-emerge the other side, and the dread of severe floods and salt surges begins to fade away. Every year, since working in the Broads, at this point I breathe a sigh of relief, "we just about got away with it, again." High salinity readings back in the middle of the summer, due to the lack of rain with the aid of northerly winds, were indeed an eye opener for me.

In September 2022, a well-reported salt surge caused vast fish kills on the river Thurne. Unfortunately for the Environment Agency, a well-publicised quote from them stated that “this is a natural occurrence”. Whether the individual was mis-quoted, or just mis-informed, the wealth of evidence that clearly demonstrates rising sea levels, more frequent, higher tides, alongside more regular salt surges due to human induced climate change left many of us scratching our heads, or indeed banging them against brick walls.



Us “Wheatfen lot” with our naturally biased, grand opinions of our fine nature reserve have a bit of a chip on our shoulder. We often find ourselves greedily staring at riverside land downstream, with their strengthened, heightened defensive banks. If only the original floodplains were once again allowed to flood. If only DEFRA produced a farm stewardship scheme that actually paid landowners to store flood water. But these are big topics, too big for one small article.



Perhaps a premonition, or more likely I’m becoming more pessimistic with age; I fear a great storm, and not the gradual sea level rise, which will result in catastrophic changes to the Broads. The surges and flood events I experience every year always lack an element or two that would have spurred them on to more terrible deeds. A wet winter, married to a week of strong northerlies climaxing around the full moon would result in one devastating mix.

Such an event may well trigger a sudden whirlwind of movement and action from the authorities, swiftly ramping up efforts to protect people, wildlife and the Broads landscape we all love. But will it be too little too late by then? Will the cost of such an event be too great, too damaging, even irreversible?

Will Fitch

AUTUMNAL REFLECTIONS FROM WROXHAM



Panoramic view of the River Bure from the Barton House Railway

There is a lot of autumnal gloom about this year - not just from the senseless killings in Ukraine; the Pound in freefall; and a Government in crisis. Even the Broads are not immune, with salt incursions and barrier failures killing lots of fish, whilst swans and other birds are dying from avian flu. I came to my boat in Wroxham to switch off from the gloom, and I was soon able to find many positive things to lift my mood.

The first was the sight of many healthy swans, swimming in beautifully clear river water. I am moored in the boating basin that was constructed for the long defunct Jack Powles hire fleet. Being just 50 metres away from the busy River Bure in Wroxham, the water in the basin has been murky and brown for as long as I can remember. However, this week, the water was crystal clear, with thriving oxygenating plants and lillies visible, as well as fish. I even discovered my missing Jeckells door cover that disappeared over 15 years ago.. its now a bit worse for wear at the bottom of the basin!

The second was a very positive boatyard owner. Despite the fears of recession, Matthew at Barnes Brinkcraft continues to invest in their hire fleet and cottages, which benefits the local economy, and to provide a cheerful, proactive service to us boat owners.

The third bit of positivity was the wonderful group of local people I repeatedly encountered over the week - volunteers! The first lot had the important but very unpleasant task of collecting dead swans or putting the very sick ones out their misery.



Crystal clear water and healthy plants in our mooring basin and The boatbuilding shed of the late John Williams now belonging to the Museum of the Broads

The second contingent of volunteers were manning the Museum of the Broads in Stalham. The museum deservedly gets a lot of coverage in Harnser, but their acquisition of the old boatbuilding shed, belonging to the late John Williams, has been nothing short of transformative for them. The large shed is beautifully preserved, inside and out, and now contains many exhibits as well a very pleasant area for tea and coffee. If you haven't been in a while, it is well worth a visit - the volunteers will give you a very warm welcome.

The third lot of volunteers were at the Barton House Railway in Wroxham - a destination I have not visited for over 25 years, when the children were young. It was much larger than I remembered, with two railway circuits, and a third one being built



at the moment over the main lawn! Alongside the restored Honing signal box, it also now has an interesting little museum and a spacious tea room. At times the volunteers outnumbered the visitors, but it was heartwarming to see so many youngsters proudly wearing their railway caps and enjoying their voluntary tasks.

Young and old volunteers at the Barton House Railway

The three wherries of the Wherry Yacht Charter Charitable Trust were moored up at the bottom of the garden, and no doubt, another band of dedicated volunteers are carefully preserving them. The Barton House Railway, with its wonderful views of the River Bure, is only open on occasional Sundays, but is well worth a visit.

It is amazing what positive things volunteers can achieve over time - whether within our own Broads Society; the Museum of the Broads; Norfolk Wildlife Rescue; Wherry Yacht Charter or the Barton House Railway, to name just a few. We are very lucky to have them, and they embody what is still so good about the country that we live in. Some of us are unfortunately not local enough to be able to volunteer for these worthy organisations ourselves, but hopefully we can still do our bit by being paid up members or friends of them.

Roger Wilson

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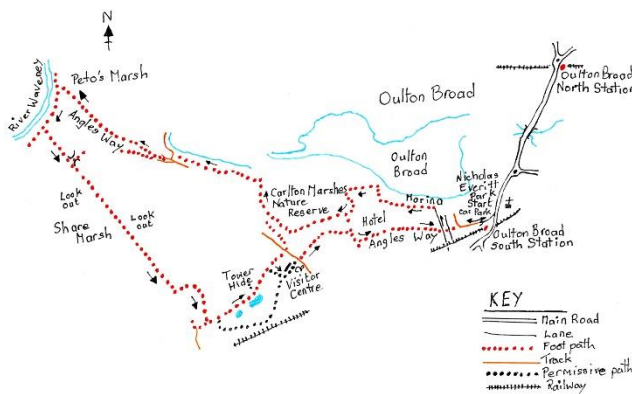
WALKS AROUND THE BROADS

Oulton Broad and Carlton Marshes



This 5-mile walk was originally written by Tony Smith who died recently, it is a tribute to him for all his help with the published walks. Start at the Nicholas Everitt Park (Pay & Display Car Park opposite St Mark's Church on A146). Outdoor Leisure 40 G/R TM 520924. Those wishing to travel there by train from Norwich might find it quicker and more convenient to alight at Oulton Broad North station and walk over the road bridge to reach the start. The Park sits beside the broad and offers facilities suitable for a family day out. The walk passes Oulton Broad South Station. It provides good views over the broad and follows short sections of the Angles Way to reach the banks of the River Waveney. It then crosses Shire Marsh; this is all part of Carlton Marshes Nature Reserve. It passes two impressive lookouts, the Tower bird hide, Sprat's Water and the Visitor Centre. Before returning along another section of the Angles Way on the way back to Everitt Park.

Refreshments: The café in the park, the Ivy House Hotel and Suffolk Wildlife's Carlton Marshes Visitor Centre Café.



Turn right opposite the church along the main road (A146) and, before the railway bridge, fork right into Marsh Road. Fork right again by the entrance to Oulton Broad South Station into a track passing Marsh House. When the track turns right, keep ahead along a hedged path. Cross a holiday estate road and then, at the next road, turn right.

Cross a low flood gate, with the broad and boats ahead. (Please read the notice about the path). Immediately turn left along a narrow-raised path with views over the broad on the right. Continue along the path, ignoring the paths on the left, two of which lead to the hotel. Follow it round a right and two left corners with reeds on the right and a dyke on the left. Then go right again and when the path goes left, keep ahead onto a grassy path with the low metal and wood flood barrier on the right.

It can be muddy along here. Ignore a path on the left. Then keep on a winding, grassy path on a bank with views over the marshes. As a hard-core path comes up from the left, turn left down it to a crossing path and turn right at posts, up onto a grassy bank, now on the Angles Way, (signed, Peto's Marsh Trail). Ignore the track on the left below. Follow the path through a gate and along a grassy path with a dyke on the left. Continue along this path for just under half a mile, then go up wooden steps to reach the bank of the River Waveney.



Oulton Broad



Carlton Marshes

Turn left along the river bank for some 350 metres. Just past a drainage station on the left, turn left at a way-mark, down to another hard path going straight over Share Marsh. Follow for almost a mile, ignoring a wooden bridge on the left. At a footpath on the right turn left with the path, ignore another path on the right, continue past a path to a tall hide on the left and ponds (Sprat's Water) on the right. Then turn right on a path to the Suffolk Wildlife Trust Visitor Centre. Go past the centre turning left past the front. Take a left path, signed Peto's and Shire Marsh Trail, to a Crossing path.

Cross to a signed Angles Way path and continue beside a meadow. At a marker-post and crossing path, turn right and at a marker-post turn left onto a fenced path. Go past Ivy House Country Hotel to the left, over the drive, through a gate and along another fenced path. Go through a gate and along a path between holiday chalets over the road used earlier and another road, keep ahead through another gate and the hedged path (part of the outward route). keep ahead on reaching a track at a corner. Keep left past the station along Marsh Road and along the main road back to the car park.



Swans on Shire Marsh



View from the Tower Hide

For more information about THE RAMBLERS' ASSOCIATION, call 07505 426750 or click www.ramblers.org.uk

Sue Walker

All images © Ramblers' Association

BIODIVERSITY, BOATING AND THE BROADS

Biodiversity – it's all about the variety of fauna, flora and their natural habitats – all of which are in trouble, not least here in the Broads. You might think the best thing for us to do is to leave nature alone in protected areas and carry on with recreational boating in the navigable rivers and broads, but it's not nearly as simple as that...



Potter Heigham Bridge

The British Isles are home to between 65,000 and 70,000 species. More than 11,000 of these have been recorded in the Broads, making this the most species-rich of any designated UK National Park, despite it being the smallest, and largely man-made. This is why we have a lot of protected areas in our region, including the Broadland Wetland of International Importance (designated under the Ramsar Convention), dozens of Nature Reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and hundreds of County Wildlife Sites.

In 2006 the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act created Natural England, charging it to protect natural habitats and listing nearly a thousand species that planning authorities, including the Broads Authority, must consider. Then, in 2011, UEA researchers, funded by the Broads Authority, brought this issue nearer to home by recording in Broadland about 1500 species of conservation concern, including 67 feared extinct, and more than 350 whose status was essentially unknown.¹ The task of the protected areas system was becoming more challenging.

A decade or so later, climate warming, drought and sea-level rise mean that major landscape changes are now on the cards, making the outlook significantly worse for biodiversity, and much more complicated for protected area managers. They are well used to improving diversity by clearing scrub, adjusting water levels through sluices, closing off access to nesting areas or controlling the spread of invasive species. But major changes in the landscape or the nature and height of the water arising from a

¹ Panter, C.J., Mossman, H.L., & Dolman, P.M. (2011). *Biodiversity Audit and Tolerance Sensitivity Mapping for the Broads*. Broads Authority Report, University of East Anglia, Norwich.

warmer climate, too much or too little rain, a tidal surge, rising seas, and even the risk of fire are quite different matters.

Environmental experts and naturalists are worried. More than 60% of Broadland species need fresh water and would be displaced by the ingress of salt. The Swallowtail butterfly and its foodplant, Milk-parsley are good examples². In September 2022 we saw a tidal surge killing tens of thousands of fish and other species way up the Bure and into the Ant and Thurne. With internationally important wildlife refuges like Hickling and Barton Broads now on the front line, a lot could be lost very quickly and, surrounded as the Broads are by drained agricultural land, it's not as if freshwater species have anywhere else to go, even if they had the luxury of time in hand. It will take major planning and engineering to control impacts such as these, probably involving better sea defences, tidal barriers and the sacrifice of agricultural areas to washlands where the surging waters can spread out on grazing marshes and floodplains.

Where does boating come into the picture? For more than a century we have enjoyed recreational boating in the peaceful, semi-natural landscape of the Broads. About 11,000 private, and more than 1000 hire boats use 200km of waterways here, and boaters make up a high proportion of the 8 million visitors welcomed annually³. Private boat-owners pay £2.49M in tolls, and hire boats £1.19M, in sum £3.68M, not dissimilar to the DEFRA national park grant of £3.40M⁴. In return for their tolls, skippers expect the traditional navigation to be kept open, safely marked, and accessible, with good facilities for launching and mooring. It's an expensive, challenging, and open-ended task for the Broads Authority, only achieved by constantly dredging silt and controlling the growth of water plants. Moreover, it must all be done in consultation with Natural England under the 2006 Act, so as not to impact unduly on biodiversity.

Toll-payers are understandably upset when they see themselves excluded from areas where rare species grow but may not be cut back to help navigation. Stonewort on Hickling is the best-known example. But as the flooding predictions of the Broadland Futures Initiative⁵ become more widely understood, boat owners are beginning to foresee the much bigger problems they will face from climate change. Rising waters are a threat to clubhouses, moorings, and favoured sailing haunts as well as to wildlife. On current analysis, by 2050 a large proportion of existing fleets will no longer be able to navigate above Ludham Bridge on the Ant, above Wroxham on the Bure, or above

² Collins, N.M., Hills, S. & Lillywhite, H. (2019). Can the Swallowtail survive in Norfolk? *Trans. Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society* 52: 62-68.

³ Broads Authority (2022), *Broads Plan, 2022-27*. <https://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/about-us/how-we-work/strategy/broads-plan-2022>

⁴ Additional support for projects and capital items (including from DEFRA) is expected to bring the Broads Authority's income to **£10.84M in FY 2021/22**.

⁵ Natural England, County Councils, Internal Drainage Boards, Broads Authority and National Farmers Union (2022) *Broadland Futures Initiative* (2022). <https://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/looking-after/climate-change/broadland-futures-initiative>

Potter Heigham on the Thurne, and will struggle to make passage through Great Yarmouth, St Olaves and Beccles. The existential threat to our much-loved boating landscapes is beginning to take centre stage.



Sailing boats at Wroxham Broad

The boating and biodiversity communities all too often seem to be divided, but it's time to set aside narrow concerns and join forces to discuss and address the shared objective of protecting the navigation, biodiversity, and the wider landscape of the Broads in the face of man-made environmental change.

Dr Mark Collins, Commodore of the Northern Rivers Sailing Club, Chair of the Norfolk & Norwich Naturalists' Society's Research Committee, and Chair of the Swallowtail & Birdwing Butterfly Trust.

BROADS SOCIETY MERCHANDISE



The full range of Broads Society branded merchandise is still available including pennants, pens, coffee mugs, tote bags, note books and stickers. Further details can be found on our website in the section headed 'Merchandise'. By ordering you will be helping to promote the Society, contributing to funds and helping with *Harnser* production costs. For ordering, postage and payment details please call 07393 422006 or email : boathousenorfolk@btconnect.com

NATIONAL PARK SOCIETIES NATIONAL CONFERENCE AND OUR LOBBYING OF PARLIAMENT

At this year's conference a notable theme was that – even for the Authorities themselves – lobbying is a poor tool for achieving good outcomes. The most successful Societies don't wait for others to attend to what needs doing. An example we were given was a Society, which acknowledged the problem experienced by communities priced out of housing. They seeded an affordable housing project with some of their own money and swiftly raised the rest from other Charities. It is surprising how much Third Sector money is available, if you only know how to ask. There is increasing belief that the Third Sector is the way forward.

We have continued to lobby MPs, the Minister and local government behind the scenes. Rather as we see on the international stage at COP 27, “government” tends to be well behind the curve dealing with Climate Change. They are reluctant to interfere with commercial interests when what is needed is leadership. As we are all beginning to realise, rather belatedly, Climate Change has already changed the landscape of the Broads and the uses to which we can put it. At one of these “lobbying” sessions, organised by the Campaign for National Parks, Julian Glover commented that everyone tells him their own Protected Landscape is different, but then they all complain about the same things. Such as, lack of affordable housing, public transport and Broad Band. Really? We don't. This brings into sharp focus the fact that we really *are* a very different landscape with our own specific needs.



Delegates at the National Conference

The good news is that DEFRA intends to publish proposals arising from the Landscape Review, and thereafter implement legislation, as soon as possible. The project is not dead.

The Broads Authority has evolved piecemeal since 1988, into something very different from the constitution of a regular National Park Authority. Parliament provided seats on the Board for the other public bodies whose cooperation is essential. None of those other bodies still exist in their original forms, yet the need for cooperation is greater than ever.

Glover criticised all the Authorities for lack of strategic direction from the Members. We are now faced with the difficult challenge of making sure the small print of the new legislation takes our uniqueness into account.

Paul Savage



New grant awarded

At the Broads Trust meeting in December, the Trustees were delighted to approve another grant application. A grant of £670 will help to fund a new educational board game developed in partnership between the Broads Authority, Extraordinary Lives and the University of Plymouth. This board game will be accompanied by a poem which is being taken into schools – The Last Eel on Earth – which raises awareness of illegal eel trafficking.

The Broads Trust has now donated over £100,000 in grants for 56 amazing projects across the Broads National Park. This is an amazing achievement thanks to the support of so many business supporters, members, visitors to the Broads and many others. Each project benefits the Broads now and for the future. View all of the projects on www.lovethebroads.org.uk/projects-we-support/



The Last Eel on Earth



The Ice Cream Float

Goodbye to 2022 and hello 2023

Everyone is agreed that 2022 has been a difficult year for so many reasons. However, our business supporters and their fabulous customers continue to support The Broads

Trust through Love the Broads by raising donations to enable us to award grants. Sadly, we have had to say “goodbye” to several loyal business supporters that have decided to close for personal or economic reasons. We shall miss their support and the relationships that we have built over the years. But, we are also delighted to welcome new businesses including the popular Ice Cream Float which cruises around parts of the Northern Broads serving ice cream. You can’t miss the distinctive pink livery.

Many businesses are now closed for the winter but will be reopening in April 2023 for Easter. We will also be having an additional Bank Holiday in May to celebrate the Coronation of HM King Charles III and Queen Camilla with the potential to increase the tourism economy and opportunities to raise donations.

It is not just the large tourism businesses that are involved with Love the Broads. Most of the businesses that raise donations are smaller ones but they make a real difference to our income. We are showcasing just a few of these. The Hungry Otter at Salhouse Broad, a shepherd’s hut which stands on the green bank overlooking the Broad. They have raised nearly £1,500 for Love the Broads over the past two years. One of the oldest and smallest boat hire operators, Maycraft at Potter Heigham, also makes a generous donation each year. The tiny marshman’s cottage situated on the River Ant, the Broads Authority’s Toad Cottage Visitor Centre at How Hill, sell merchandise of badges and books and also raise hundreds of pounds each year from visitors to this popular museum whilst visiting How Hill.

The Broads Trust with Love the Broads wishes all Broads Society members a healthy and happy 2023.



BROADS SOCIETY GIFT SUBSCRIPTIONS

Looking for an unusual gift idea? Why not consider an annual subscription to the Broads Society? From £16 for four editions of our magazine, Harnser, with news, views and articles on many Broads related topics, regular articles about the Broads, commentary from our campaigns and much more. Help the Broads Society to protect this unique part of our country.

Please contact the Administrator, details on page 3.

CHURCHES AROUND THE BROADS

13. Reedham : Church of St John the Baptist

The Church of St John the Baptist lies to the north-east of the village, surrounded by marshland rich in bird and animal life. Reedham is one of the oldest recorded religious establishments in Norfolk with records showing that a church, founded by Bishop Felix of Dunwich, has stood on this site since the 7th century. The north wall of the present building is thought to be the earliest existing part of the church, possibly dating from around the 11th century. Part of the wall is exposed showing a herringbone pattern of reused Roman tiles and the exterior of the church reuses grey stone blocks, almost certainly also Roman in origin. Further archaeology is exploring where all this material came from; the stone matches that used at Brancaster Roman Fort and it seems extremely likely there was once a large Roman structure here too.

The church is listed Grade I and is built of flint, brick and limestone with limestone dressings and a pantiled roof. The west tower dates from the 15th century, the chancel incorporates a former south aisle and there is a north porch and vestry.



View of the church from the south

In 1981 a cigarette stub thrown by a workman from the roof of the tower set light to the thatched roof that was continuous over the nave and chancel. The building was completely gutted and was repaired over the next two decades, with the interior being completely reordered and refurnished following the fire damage.

From the outside, looking to the east, there appear to be two chancels side by side, but that to the north is the true chancel, with the one to the south being a chancel aisle chapel, referred to as the Berney Chapel. An interesting feature is the glass in the two



Tower from the south-west and stained glass to the east windows

east windows, dating from 1999 by Sarah Bristow which replaces that lost in the fire. The chancel has a yellow and a blue cloud approaching each other, with the chapel showing three purple crosses. However, what is remarkable is that on close inspection the windows reveal maps etched into the glass with an Ordnance Survey map of the Yare Valley behind the clouds and a map of the Holy Land behind the three crosses.

David Edleston



Reedham Church from the air looking west

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NEWS SNIPPETS

News from The Locks Inn Community Pub, Geldeston



The Locks Inn, at the head of the navigation on the River Waveney, was bought by the community in 2020 and has been running as a community pub since May 2021. It now has well over 1500 shareholders making it the largest ownership of any pub in the country. The pub is off grid and off road and its remoteness and position on the river makes it a magnet for visitors from all over Norfolk and Suffolk and indeed for holiday makers from

across the country. But its location also poses very significant challenges especially when it comes to sewage! The regulations are tightening and the pub requires a major investment to ensure it has a fully compliant sewerage system for the long-term. A new mains sewerage connection system is the preferred solution and this has now been designed, has been approved by the appropriate authorities and has funding in place. Work started in November and should be complete before Easter. The second major challenge for the pub is energy generation and plans are afoot to significantly increase the amount of solar PV so that this becomes the principal energy source for the pub. The pub has a strong music heritage with music at least twice a week. It also hosts a series of unique events throughout the year including Dwile Flonking, Winter Solstice celebration, Maypole dancing and conker championships. The community owned pub is open 7 days a week in the summer and 5 days in winter. Opening hours, food service hours and details of events can be seen www.thelocksinn.com

Broadland Futures Initiative

On 24th November, the Upper Thurne Working Group invited the Broadland Futures Initiative to run a pilot workshop with its members. The day was attended by influential stakeholders with a wide range of interests. A mix of group and individual activities took place and this was supplemented by presentations from the BFI team. Much was discussed and deliberated, and feedback was given to direct the strategy as well as any learning that could



be taken forward into future public engagement. The BFI team will take some time now to review all of the feedback as well as collate the information, excellent knowledge and useful experiences that were provided on the day. A follow up presentation will be given at the next Upper Thurne Working Group meeting as well as a summary report of the day that will be published in the BFI website and provided to members.

First phase of swing bridge work completed by Network Rail



Reedham swing railway bridge over the River Yare

A package of works on swing bridges in Norfolk and Suffolk was completed in the autumn as part of a project to improve their reliability. The iconic swing bridges are designed to carry trains over waterways and swing open to let boats through, but they are over 100 years old and their internal parts have become unreliable. During the project, Network Rail's engineers are replacing these parts, making the bridges less likely to develop faults and reducing the need for costly maintenance. Dates for future works will be announced in due course and will primarily include a full replacement of the hydraulic and mechanical systems that the bridges use to open and close. During October, survey work was additionally carried out at Oulton Broad swing bridge, which is also part of the project. Network Rail also carried out essential drainage, track and vegetation management works along the Norwich-Lowestoft line.

New video on Hardley Mill

A new video has been produced by Water, Mills and Marshes and the Friends of Hardley Mill, shot and edited by local photographer/filmmaker Julian Claxton. The video takes a tour around the mill, explains how mills worked and talks about their fascinating history. The video and can be viewed on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=su5xCGL4imA>



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RECENT NEWS FROM THE BROADS AUTHORITY



All aboard with 'Rails, Sails & Trails'

An exciting youth engagement project which ran from August to December 2022 has helped to introduce young people to the wonders of the Broads National Park, by train.

The 'Rails, Sails and Trails' project, managed by the Broads Authority's Education Team and funded by the Wherry and Bittern Lines Community Rail Partnership, provided opportunities for young people and families who wouldn't usually see the Broads by rail to get out into the landscape. The project took schools and families by rail to stations along the Wherry Lines, where they took part in activities and created artwork based around the people, places and heritage of the Broads and Wherry Lines – the railway network connecting Norwich, Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft.

School children had a visit from the project team to introduce them to the Broads through presentations, games and models, followed up by a day out on the train via Wherry Lines. Heading out with Oulton Broad Primary School, the train made its way through grazing marshes, past rivers and drainage dykes. They discovered the rich history of Reedham village, looking at photos of the railway and its staff in the 1930s/40s and imagining what the station would have been like 100 years ago. They compared current riverside life to Victorian times and saw Sanderson's boatyard, where wherries Hathor and Maud were built when it was occupied by Halls boatyard.

At Brooms Boats in Brundall, artist Julie Bolus helped the children capture a Broadland scene with stencils and make a giant collage of their journey.



School groups at Reedham Railway Station and Brooms Boatyard, Brundall

Museum heritage visit

In November our Heritage Asset Review Group paid a visit to the fantastic Museum of the Broads and saw the 'From Sails to Blades' exhibit that provides a history of wind power in the Broads and its impact on the landscape. The exhibit was provided by Water, Mills and Marshes: Broads Landscape Partnership Scheme. Since 2010, the Authority has had a Heritage Asset Review Group (HARG), set up by members of the Planning Committee to guide officers in the protection of heritage assets. Initially, the group was set up to address the high number of historic 'Buildings at Risk', but they now collaborate on all aspects of the historic environment.



Broads Authority Budget

Broads Authority Chief Executive John Packman highlighted how inflation is having a large impact on the Authority's costs.

Along with the other National Parks and Councils, staff received a salary increase for 2021/22 of £1,925. Given that staff costs are the largest part of the Authority's budget, this had a big impact. Meanwhile, the price of diesel and raw materials to maintain the waterways, such as steel and wood for piling and capping and aggregate for moorings, have risen very rapidly. A cash National Park Grant of £3.2 million means that the value of government support for the area has fallen again, and in real terms represents half of what the Broads received in 2009/10.

Fortunately, boat numbers and toll income of £3.4 million have held up well in 2022, with the total number of private boats being above the pre-Covid level. The same is true for hire boats and this masks a decrease in the weekly hired-fleet and an increase

in day boats. The number of smaller craft, paddleboards, canoes and kayaks, continues to increase and this has brought a new younger generation out on the water.

This year, the Authority's total income will exceed £10 million for the first time, with external funding for projects such as Water, Mills and Marshes and CANAPE, and income from sales and fees making a significant contribution. Nevertheless, the Authority faces some difficult choices when it decides on next year's budget in January and will be looking to reduce its overheads significantly to maintain services to the public.

New five-year plan for the Broads launched



The Broads Plan was launched on 14 November 2022 as the key management plan used by the Authority and its partners, governing all areas of our work and setting out a vision for the future of the Broads. It covers a five-year period from 2022 to 2027 and is developed through consultation with partners, stakeholders and members of the public.

To read the plan in its entirety, please visit our website: <https://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/about-us/how-we-work/strategy/broads-plan-2022>

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*A very Happy New Year
to all our readers
from the Harnser Editorial Team*

