

## **PLANNING YOUR CRUISE**

Whatever you plan, do not be over-ambitious and remember that, even if the weather conditions change, the boat must be back at the Yard ready to be cleaned for the next hire.

There are links on the Hunter's Yard website to local tide tables (long forecast) and local weather (5-day forecast) and in the boat pack there is a section on moorings. Any reference on the availability of pubs does not imply a recommendation or even that the pub is still open - owners or chefs change too often to be certain. Broads Authority 24-hour moorings are free but there is a charge for some moorings owned privately.

The Yard staff can also advise during your hand-over brief on the best places to head for considering the conditions and time available.

### **Short Break - 2 day**

However quick you are, you are unlikely to set off from the Yard before mid-day. Even if the tides and wind are both favourable (very unlikely), heading for Hickling through Potter Heigham bridge is too ambitious. Why waste much of your sailing time going through a bridge.

A recommendation for a first day is to head for Ranworth (Malthouse Broad) where there is a shop and a pub next to the staithe, a good nature walk to the Norfolk Wildlife Trust Centre and an interesting church. There is good open-water sailing on the Broad. Hunter boats may moor overnight in the dinghy dyke even if there is space on the moorings amongst the stink boats. Or try mooring on a mudweight if you don't want to go ashore.

If the wind is favourable make a stop at St Benet's Abbey which now has very informative displays or sail on past Ranworth to Cockshoot Dyke where there is a good nature ramble.

If the wind won't take you as far as Ranworth turn down Fleet Dyke (opposite St Benet's Abbey) for South Walsham. There are moorings on Fleet Dyke although it is a walk to the nearest pub in the village (about 1¼ miles) or use a mudweight on the Broad. Mooring on the inner Broad is not permitted.

On Day 2 head back to the Yard and, depending on conditions, drop in to South Walsham where there is good sailing on the outer and inner broads. If there is still time sail towards Acle Bridge and back (popular pub next to the bridge) and/or sail towards Potter Heigham and back (but don't forget which way the tide is flowing). If you want to stay on the boat for your final night, moor close to the Yard on the river or at Thurne Dyke - there is a pub at the end of the dyke. An early start should get you back to the Yard on time.

This should give you a good experience of river and broad sailing. The river above Ranworth has many trees and the wind can be fickle. Going up the Ant has the delay of Ludham Bridge soon after the start.

## Short Break - 3 day

You might be very lucky enough for the wind and tides to get you easily through Potter Heigham Bridge both ways to aim for Hickling where there is a pub next to the staithe at the far end of the Broad. (See detail for a week's cruise)

Otherwise just extend the 2-day cruise. There are plenty of alternatives without going under bridges.

## Cruise for a Week

Don't work out a rigid plan before you arrive. Conditions will change and you should be prepared to adjust your plans to suit the weather. Below is a selection of destinations but not all will be achievable in a week so take your pick. The Yard is a good place for a mid-week stop with good facilities between trips upstream and downstream of Womack Dyke.

**Thurne.** Going through Potter Heigham bridge must be timed carefully. Quanting will be hard if the current is too fast against you and controlling the direction of the boat is almost impossible with a fast current with you. Aim to pass through close to slack water - there is advice in the boat pack.

Hickling Broad has open water but don't stray too far beyond the marked channel. It is a national nature reserve. There is a pub at the staithe.

Horsey Mere has good sailing and it is about a 1½ mile walk from the staithe to the beach and sea. It is also a nature reserve. The pub is about ¾ mile from the staithe. Meadow Dyke to get to Horsey is long, narrow and twisty and it is very rare to be able to sail both ways so be prepared for some quanting.

West Somerton is at the source of the Thurne; instead of turning up Kendle Dyke towards Hickling but continue on eastwards. The channel at Martham Ferry is narrow and the boat sheds alter the wind flow so is best to be ready with the quant. The river is narrow but peaceful and the water at Somerton is crystal clear. A peaceful mooring with a pub about ¼ mile away.

**Bure.** The middle section of the Bure has the best river sailing on the northern rivers.

Downstream from Thurne Mouth is wide and relatively straight with moorings and pub at Acle Bridge. There is also a pub at Upton but Upton Dyke is long and narrow with boats moored all along one side and it is difficult to pass other craft: sailing in the dyke is not recommended although it is possible to use the jib alone with a following wind.

The river upstream from Thurne Mouth is popular with broads at South Walsham and Ranworth (see notes on short-break cruises). There are convenient moorings and interest at St Benet's Abbey and Cockshoot Dyke. The river banks above Ranworth are wooded so sailing can be slow. Horning is a popular village with lots of facilities and so obviously gets crowded. Blackhorse (or Little Hoveton) Broad just upstream of Horning has good open water. Further upstream is Salhouse Broad (village with pub about ¾ mile away): a nice spot with good moorings and a nature walk across the river at Great Hoveton Broad.

Beyond Salhouse, through a heavily wooded section of the river, is Wroxham Broad - good open sailing but hardly worth the effort of struggling through the trees. Wroxham is full of motor boats and plenty of shops, etc but no facilities for yachts. Although Coltishall has good moorings and pubs the river above Wroxham Bridge is wooded, narrow and impossible to sail so lots of quanting is necessary if you really feel the need to go that far.

**Ant.** The Ant is narrow but leads to Barton Broad which is large and has the best open water sailing - there are marker posts on the Broad but Hunter Boats can sail anywhere since it has been dredged. The river can be awkward to sail so look at the tide tables and try to go with the flow.

The river from the junction with the Bure to Ludham Bridge is open but twisty. Take care when approaching the bridge (there is advice in the boat pack). There are good moorings and interesting activities at How Hill. Beyond How Hill the river is narrow and heavily wooded but, although the quant will often have to be used, the destination of Barton Broad is well worth the effort. There are moorings and an interesting church but no pub at Irstead.

Off the SW corner of Barton Broad is Gaye's Staithe with free moorings and toilets not far away. The Lime Kiln Dyke from there to Neatishead (pub and shop) has too many trees so must be quanted. The staithe at Neatishead fills quickly and so it is just as easy to moor at Gaye's Staithe and walk to the village ( $\frac{3}{4}$  Mile).

Barton village to the north of the Broad has free moorings, a boatyard with showers but no shop or pub. The river north of the Broad is wooded but Sutton Broad (hardly a broad, just a wide river) has good mudweight moorings and a pub at the staithe. Stalham is not far away with shops, the Museum of the Broads (worth visiting) and the fire engine shed of the first fire brigade outside London (now a small museum).

We do not advise going south of Acle Bridge and to the Southern Broads unless you are very experienced on Hunter yachts. The tides on the Bure flow fast and negotiating Yarmouth and its bridges without an engine requires knowledge and skill.

Happy sailing.