

North West Norfolk Week 2009

From (nearly) the back of the fleet!

(Or "The week we went to Norfolk with a 40 year old wooden clinker vintage N12 to celebrate their 60th anniversary – and we didn't break anything, capsize or come last!") The usual proper" who won what" reports are at:

http://www.national12.org/events/2009/north_west_norfolk_week.shtml and

<http://www.norfolkweek.co.uk/pdf/norfolk%20week%20report%2009.pdf> (where we actually got a mention as the first (and last) vintage yot). This is the alternative report with no punches pulled!

The pre-NWNW warm-up didn't go well this year. Having come second at Welland with the new Aardspars carbon mast on Perfect Kiss N3157, the fitting of the new mast ram totally bxxgxrxd up the whole rig and we were beaten into last place at TVSC by the entire handicap fleet. A day off to drive to Bristol to collect N2399 (the) Mr Jones for the "Turner Collection" of odd and classic National 12s meant I didn't have time to sort out the Microclipper so N2487 Dolly Daydream (China Doll design) was pressed into service. And then the Volvo failed its MOT on the Thursday, so instead of leaving at 13:00 on Friday we (that is Paul Turner (PT) and Christine Marshall (CM)) set out at 18:30 and finally arrived at TeamTrentValley HQ at Burnham Market (BM) at 21:00 to be greeted by David Peacock (DP) and Tricia Wood (TW) N3524 and Tim Gatti (TG) and son Seb (SB) N3227 – and a meal (with obligatory wine and beer for medicinal purposes only!)

Saturday: Hunstanton – the forecast seemed to be pretty gloomy for the week ahead but the day dawned dry and breezy. And when we saw the list of N12s it looked more like a Burton Week entry! There were the usual well organised two races in the afternoon and we followed the main fleet round in the company of TG, Dave Borrett, Dirk Bougard and Ben Harris; we lost Radical Edward in the first race with major centreboard failure but everyone else seemed to be present and correct at the end of the second. Whilst the girls cooked up the evening meal, Dave and I sloped off to the Jolly Sailor to meet Nigel Playford (NP) and daughter Hannah, to be joined by Paul Pelling.

Sunday: Hunstanton – for the first race the sea was a bit lumpy and the wind went down for the second; same suspects at the back of the fleet after 2 general recalls. We saw Marcus Ingram, ex N12 sailor from Up River, crack the mast on his Phantom before the second race, and we lost Dave Borrett for the remainder of the week to family commitments and gear failure. As it was DP's birthday (but not a significant one) we went to the White Horse in Brancaster for a splendid evening meal.

Monday: Kings Lynn (KL) – Having been searching all day Sunday for TW's sun cream it was found – in the freezer! Breakfast was spent comparing injuries and scars, betting on when SG would finally appear (lunchtime) and hearing all about TG's thespian career. After some serious bimbuling of TG's boat, he and NP headed off to KL, whilst the rest of us welcomed former TVSC member Anja Newman and her 2yo daughter Eleanor to TTVHQ – Anja spoke to El in German to ensure that she, like herself, would be multilingual. Despite his allergy to "brats" PT actually found El to be "quite endearing"! The lads returned after 22:00 with tales of daring do and deep horrid mud.

Tuesday: Wells – we had a lazy morning and trotted off to Wells for the evening race which was quite breezy with various casualties including Ian Gore's mast plus DP and Patrick Elcombe(PE)

breaking/losing their rudders. Our battle was with the usual tail enders but it was a jolly race (nearly capsized on the gibe mark, but as the crew was up to her usual athletic standard, we didn't!) and back to TTVHQ for a veggie lasagne per Anja. We were slightly perplexed as our other house guest had disappeared without trace. The house was searched from top to bottom without success but someone remembered NP muttering about a game of Bridge at 8.00 in Oxford, or was it Cambridge?

Wednesday: Wells – up at 04:15 to a dry sunny and windless morning. We had a much better race finishing just behind the Pie Boys and PE who got us at the last mark. Discovered that we were not the only ones to have had several incidents with a grumpy blue Albxcrx who couldn't understand the port/starboard rules! The general feeling on the N12 fleet was that perhaps the race was one lap too long, but we got value for money! It was hard work getting back into Wells against the ebb tide.

And the feedback from the first few days was that we discovered that we were the boat to beat – in that no one wanted to finish behind the only vintage N12 there! The cheery man in the other Albacore did hail us loudly to express his view “that's what a National 12 should look like – a well preserved garden shed” – I think he was being complimentary. The day was rounded off by a jolly pleasant BBQ at Up River's team HQ; our thanks to them for their kind hospitality and good company.

Thursday: Blakeney – another very early start. Sailing out to the start line the water was red in places with millions of ladybirds – very odd. The wind kept changing resulting in three pre-start course changes. The actual course was “interesting” and “challenging” (more like “dxmn quirky” per the crew) – a beat from the start line to the windward mark where we turned right onto a reach to the next mark, where we turned right again to reach back to the previous mark to turn right again (through the next fleet who were also turning right to go to the mark we had just come from) to head off on a run – as the wind died! Seeing PE heading off to the starboard/land side of the course and everyone else off to the port/ seaward side, we headed off after PE, arrived much later at the leeward mark with the single hander fleet, and were amazed to be in the company of Meds and Tom Stewart who got past us on the final short beat to the finish. Scored an amazing 7th with a probably unseemly cheer from our boat as we crossed the line – but hey, forgive us, we are rarely that far up the fleet! And TG was 9th!

Thursday: Burnham Overy Staithe - The stalwarts sailed the Jenny Lee race that evening (a bit too late and cold for us!) with a splendid reception and prize giving at the race officer's house afterwards. The full report is at: <http://www.overystaithesc.org.uk/results09.php#jlee> but there is no mention of Vince Phillips; I am sure that he was there with Fiona sailing their vintage Whisper?

Friday: Snettisham – early morning call at 05:00 and DP wasn't going to sail; he will deny this vigorously! However, when he realised the rest of us were keen and raring to go, he ventured outside to check the wind and had a re-think. It was hissing it down as we left BM but the rain relented, the wind got up, and we had two jolly fine races (despite another general recall in the second). We couldn't wait to feed that evening, so we called in at the Jolly Sailor for a quick meal before off to Snett for the final evenings' entertainment. Two live bands and excellent fireworks rounded off one of the best NWNWs for many years. Incidentally, the second band was asked to play something suitable just before the fireworks – so they played “Smoke on the Water”! And the teenagers were seen to be suitably embarrassed by the over 42's “rocking on” to the Stones, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Deep Purple etc.

And here's dedication (or insanity) for you! TG disappeared at 11:15 Friday morning to drive to Bradford to drop off his Baggy, then to Yeadon to collect N341 (a ribbed N12), drove back to BM arriving at 00:50 Saturday morning for a quick zizz and then set off that morning for Wroxham for the Vintage N12 weekend but only after one of the neighbours had reversed into TG's pride and joy! The boat cover and the car came off worst – they knew how to build boats in them days!

Observations:

1. Many would have liked the prize-givings to be held much sooner after the races but it transpired that David Baddeley was having various problems with the results software – so he was forgiven especially as he had worked so hard before and during the week.
2. Perhaps next year's opening briefing should include a reminder that the sailing is for fun and enjoyment, which can be spoiled by bad manners on the water – and the rules are there for everyone's safety! We witnessed, or were innocently involved in, several blatant incidents where penalties should have been taken, but sadly weren't. Yes, we could (and perhaps should) have protested, but it is a holiday sailing week.

The great thing about NWNW is the catching up with old sailing friends; most of the regulars were there and various N12 peeps appeared during the week including Suzy Sallis, Ann Peebles and John Holltum, plus we may just have tempted Hugh and Alison Ambery back into vintage N12s with the promise to loan them N2020 (the original Starfish) for the TVSC Vintage Open on 13th September!

And on a lighter note, for entertainment value, TTVHQ has decided to inaugurate **The SCHNULLER AWARD for N12s** – “dummy” in German (suggested by Anja & Eleanor Newman with grateful thanks to them for raising the cultural diversity at TTVHQ at BM 2009). Nominations so far are:

1. **Tim Gatti** – asking Seb to jump out to hold boat at KL not realising that the water was over 5 feet deep; crew disappeared briefly! TG then jumped out his side and slipped under the boat in the mud.
2. **David Peacock** – over-cooking the roll tacking at Wells after the race and capsizing in zero wind; had to be rescued.

Please forward any other nominations for all those incidents that carry the “DER” factor to me at paul@alverbanksails.co.uk for consideration. The presentation of the award will not be announced, but sprung on the unsuspecting winner/victim at a suitability embarrassingly large N12 event!

AND FINALLY – many thanks to all the NWNSA team and to the Clubs involved for all the hard work that so many people put in to make the 60th Anniversary a huge success – and we will be back next year!

Paul Turner N2487 Dolly Daydream (crewed by Christine Marshall) Trent Valley, 13.08.09