

North West Norfolk Week 2011

From the back of the N12 fleet (as usual)!

The results are at:

<http://www.norfolkweek.co.uk/Nat%2012%202011/Nat%2012%202011.htm>

As many of you will know the “Turner Collection” now extends to six (6) N12s, all but one being original first of design – but which boat to take to Norfolk? Normally N3157 Perfect Kiss (the original Microclipper), classified as an Admirals Cup boat, is pressed into service, (except for the 60th anniversary year when N2487 Dolly Daydream powered her way to last). But this year, having entered the totally unique (odd?) Shotgun N2359 in the vintage section for the Burton Week National Championship at the end of August, I thought it would be a “good idea” to get some sea sailing practice. It should be noted that the crew is not overly impressed with the whole Shotgun idea!

Friday 29th: *(the day the lighting board fell off)* Having always plodded across country via Grantham, Sutton Bridge etc., the new satnav sent us a totally new route down the M1 and past Peterborough – longer and it would have been quicker had not a large lorry decided to have a blowout and subsequent scrape with the central reservation with added tailback.

It was like “home from home” arriving at the usual house in Burnham Mark-Up – Team Trent Valley HQ (TTVHQ) (plus a few itinerants from Notts County who would not be persuaded to bring their N12 instead of the faster RS400).

Saturday: Hunstanton *(the day we beat a new Feeling Foolish!)* With racing at 16:00 it was a more relaxed start than usual (although there was a strange logic to the parking allocation – we arrived early with a very heavy old boat and were directed as far as possible from the slipway but the late comers got the best places park close by the launching area. Only a minor whinge coz everything else HSC did was with their usual excellent organisation).

This year there was only one long race rather than two shorter ones – apparently the result of a poll last year but none of us could find anyone who had been asked! The boat went well and we beat a Foolish; the recovery to the shore was hairy with an onshore wind plus surf up against the sea wall – the beach party were brilliant (and brave!)

The house party this year included Dave Peacock’s son Charlie plus fiancée Caroline and we were joined later that evening by John Sears (JLS) and kids – Mark (14 and 6ft+) was to crew for JLS and Catherine (10 and under 5ft) was pressed into willing service at the front end of Howard Stevenson’s Big Issue.

Sunday: Hunstanton *(the day we weren’t last, again!)* An early start (09:00). It was hard work to actually get up to the start line against the tide with little wind but the boat went surprisingly well; we had a good race and got an OK result courtesy of several retirees and

beating that FF again. We actually finished just behind another FF – names withheld to avoid further embarrassment!

Parked the boat at Brancaster and enjoyed the rest of the hot and sunny day.

Monday: Brancaster (*we like Brancaster!*) A good steady breeze saw us tailed off last by some distance but we didn't give up and (heroically) roll tacked in the slack water to catch and pass an FF just before the line. The wind did fall away quite badly for the late finishers and it was very difficult to actually get over the line.

After racing a "senior" gentleman, who had been waving to us from a cruiser (in a friendly fashion!) came over to chat about N12s. He introduced himself as David Hadlow a former N12 sailor ex Middle Nene and in our chat the topic got round to Mike Nokes - "he brought a very strange boat to Middle Nene back in the 1960's, one with a flat bow. I wonder what every happened to that N12". My answer? "David – you are leaning on it!"

More about Shotgun at:

<http://www.national12.org/boats/index.php?action=view&value=2359>

Monday Evening: Burnham Overy Staithe (*the evening we would have been the first vintage boat but for a navigation error!*). What joy – two other vintage N12s came out to play – Bernard Clark with Ellie in their immaculate Sparklet and Vince and Fiona Phillips sailing their 7 plank Whisper. There were lots of boats on the start line for a reaching start to a very narrow gap between two serious obstructions – but no one crashed! A lovely evening sail – no idea who won – probably Graham again? Embarrassingly, TTV turned up at the reception kindly held by the sailing club, after the prize giving – oops!

Tuesday: Wells (*the day we had a moral victory over a Baggy*). 07:30 start with the usual long haul out to the start past the new harbour built for the service boats for the new off shore wind turbines. And, bless the race officer, he set a simple course with three buoys all to port (making life so much simpler for us river sailors!) We had a wonderful battle with Steve Le Grys and Gerald Copsey for three laps in the steady breeze with a humongous tacking battle up to the finish line – the only way a certain Baggy could stop us overtaking was to cover every move – we lost count at 50 tacks! A lone Fireball whizzing across on starboard took one look at the battle and wisely took cover.

And in the evening (when we had recovered) it was DP's 60th birthday bash at Brancaster Sailing Club – a splendid evening with added BBQ to which all the N12 sailors had been invited. The only disappointment was that DP didn't upturn a full pint pot over his head as per the previous birthday party there (although that was 32 years previously!)

Wednesday: Blakeney the race was scheduled for 08:30 with a very high tide forecast to flood the whole car park. Although the tide arrived, and the sun came to play, the wind didn't – until after the racing was abandoned and the tide had started to roar out. The word

went out that the race would be postponed to Friday at Snettisham (two races there instead of the planned one at 09:30).

We had a monsoon late afternoon – nearly didn't get to the Jolly Sailors for a pre-dinner drink! Back to TTVHQ to devour party leftovers and the marrow (long story!)

Thursday: *(the day the early starts took their toll and only the Sears family decided to bravely head off to Kings Lynn – and why is it, every year, that everyone who braves the stinky mud there tells you it was the best sail of the week?)* Having tried on two previous years to get to see round Holkham Hall, and failed, we (that is DP, Tricia and I) finally did the tour (as it persisted it down outside).

I mentioned in discussions with DP that I had acquired a second hand t-foil, and was vaguely thinking about putting it on Shotgun for the Burton (plus CP had been researching just how to play the winged rudders). Within hours he had sourced all the bits (thanks to Mike Day and Paul at Rondor Boats) and we had arranged to do all the necessary fitting on the weekend before Brightlingsea. The project now had serious possibilities even if a certain Mr Ledger said he was looking forward to quoting for a replacement transom! The Steves Sallis and Le Grys plus Copsey (N) kindly let me interrogate them about the set-ups on their yots. We now have a (cunning) plan!

Friday: Snettisham *(the day we would have won had we not had gear failure).* The day dawned clear and sunny, but clouded over to give a cool but decent breeze. The course was another simple triangle, scheduled for two races. HS managed to fall out of the back of his boat on the start line leaving Catherine with the upturned boat. JLS whizzed over to check but CS was clearly more amused than anything else! We bashed up the beat not far behind the fleet and went quite fast off the wind – the boat was much drier than we had expected of a vintage yot. However at the leeward mark, disaster. CP pulled the Cunningham as we rounded the mark, there was a loud bang and the mainsail dropped by a foot, the main halyard having parted. We were only 100 yards behind the fleet – honestly. A long trip back to the beach for repairs (i.e. tying the sail to the top of the mast with the bucket string) saw us back at the start of the second race) albeit with half the beach in the boat slowly exiting through the bailers! There were several retirees in the first race including Nick Copsey (mainsheet pulley string) and DP missing a lap.

D&TP went home immediately after racing so as to get to Salcombe on the Saturday and I spent the rest of the day sorting the rigging and setting up a new mainsheet arrangement. Mercifully there were no more leftovers so it was to the Jolly that we adjourned to feed with HS to be joined later by Mr Ledger and Liz.

Saturday: Snettisham *(the day the knee said “no more sailing this week”)* it was cold, grey, miserable and breezy as we surfaced that morning – so we had another rest day and watched a diminished fleet leave the beach.

There was a panic when JLS found that his (best) results in his RS400 had been given to the other 400. And we got a maximum score 13 out of 13, in our 45 year old boat!

One of the great things about NWNW is catching up with old sailing friends and reminiscing. David Hadlow got to catch up with JLS and HS who were standing close by at Brancaster and Hugh Ambery (who over the years built a few N12s himself) asked me one day if I knew what Howard Stevenson was doing these days – answer – “standing behind you!”.

Negotiations are underway for the loan of several of the “Turner Collection” vintage N12s for the Trent Valley Open Meeting in September – Graham Camm being one applicant (he won last year sailing Shotgun on its first outing on water for over 30 years **) and hopefully will see Hugh and Alison Ambery return to Trent Lock (where they first met 300 years ago!)

** http://www.national12.org/events/2010/trent_valley_september_open_meet.shtml

I’m sure everyone who participated would want to thank David Baddeley and all the members of the various NWNSA clubs for all their dedication and fantastic work running the week. And if you haven’t tried NWNW yet – you should book now for next year! We have.

Paul Turner (crewed by Christine Preston) Trent Valley, Thursday 18th August 2011