

2nd Southern Rivers Cruise 2011

Saturday

Arrived at Martham about 10.30am, quickly loaded the boat and headed for Potter. LW 11.06 and made it just in time. Moored up on the 24hr quiet mooring and walked up for provisions and fish n chips for lunch, would avoid this! On the way up we met Hugh Gerrard with his family out for a sail and had a chat with them. Later back at the boat we met Rose & Peter Pigula and had a chat with them before heading down to Oby to wait for the late afternoon tide to head down to Ted's mooring. Had a tidy up on the boat as we had just thrown things on board when we left and later had tea with Peter & Helen. Just as we were getting ready to leave two walkers came past just as it started raining. Thinking there was going to be a down pour Gary offered them a lift as they were heading for Acle for the night. We dropped them off at the Hermitage mooring and carried on to Ted's. Not much wind by now so motored down. Just managed to squeeze in when we got there as a cruiser was moored in the middle, but we all managed to get in (Ripple, Claire, Lacewing, Mallard, Chariot & Mezereon). We had a lovely evening on the bank with some of Brian's neighbours Matt & Amanda on their boat Lady Georgiana, potential new members.

Sunday

Up and away 9.10 heading for Breydon, Matt & Amanda came with us as they had never crossed Breydon before. Caught it just right, went up on the mud near Breydon Bridge to put the mast and sails up. A launch came along and thought we were stuck and despite telling them we were ok and on a rising tide they hung around until we were off, they said the mud was sticky!!!! Had a fantastic sail all the way to Reedham, head to wind for the swing bridge so motored through there. Put our sails down just before the ferry and motored round the corner to the Chet. Met Mum & Dad coming down from Hardley and travelled up to Loddon almost together. Arrived at Loddon about 1.45pm and had some salad for lunch joined by Mum & Dad. Managed to get everyone in one at a time and had a lazy afternoon on the bank. Helped Dad put his sails on and then the home brew came out. As we had started this pre evening meal, Gary ordered a take away so that I did not have to cook. Just as well I had nothing to do because this had got a kick to it, thank you to all those that contributed, it made for a very interesting evening.

Monday

Walked up into Loddon for supplies, BBQ food for tonight, sugar, ice cubes as it was now getting hot and of course maggots. Motored down the Chet and moored at the Iron Cross for lunch to wait for the tide. Rhythm of Hamm, Ripple & Claire all joined us and we waited for the tide about 1.5 hrs late. We all put up sails and sailed all the way down to Rockland Woohoo!! It was lovely to see Mum & Dad sail all the way too, the first one of the year for them. We had tea & cakes on the bank followed by BBQ, more home brew & music. Another lovely evening on the bank until late, the wind again has gone all the way around.

Tuesday

We woke to a grey day, light rain turning to heavy. Mum & Dad headed back today as lots of things in the garden to check on, but would be back later in the week. They were back in Hardley by about 12.00 both with wet trousers. Allan Winters also headed off today to Oulton Broad as he needed some fittings for his boat again to return later in the week. High water at 12.30 so lunch at Rockland before heading up river under motor, ok for water so carried on through Brundall. Caught up with Ripple just before Postwick Bridge and took some pictures of them, Claire & Lacewing going under to check for clearance. Hardly any boats on the river and only one moored up at Whittlingham. Tea & cakes on the bank followed by a lovely hot shower and pre dinner drinks on Ripple.

Wednesday

Tom had to go home today for his bike test tuition but would return on Thursday with Mum & Dad. A friend of ours came and collected him for us. We had decided that as we didn't have far to go today we would all have a trip up into Norwich by boat. Peter & Helen were picking some friends up for a sail and unfortunately could not come with us. We put Mezereon's mast down and everyone climbed aboard. It wasn't long before the light rain arrived but not too bad. By the time we had gotten up into the centre of Norwich it was raining hard so we dropped mud weight under Magdalen Street Bridge for about 10 minutes until it eased. We carried on up until we reached new mills as far as you can get, turned in the basin and headed

back to Morrison's where we spent an hour stocking up on food & fuel. By the time we had finished shopping the weather had improved and we motored back to Whittlingham for lunch. Some nice ham rolls & a drop of sparkling grapefruit juice did the trick. There was a bit of wind after lunch so we set off, sailed slowly through Postwick bridge but couldn't make it all the way to Bramerton as it was getting late so motored the last little bit. Graham had bought his pop up gazebo so we put that up and had tea & cakes. The cakes eventually went away and out came the BBQ's. We had a lovely evening out on the bank together and a peaceful night too.

Thursday

Some fisherman came down early but did not disturb us. High water was about 10.30 so we waited for the tide and motored down to Brundall for water. Sails up and a cracking sail all the way to Langley. On the way we spotted Bella moored at Beauchamp Arms, they had crossed on Tuesday and were waiting for us to come back down river. Met Claire round the corner and had a great sail together to Langley. Had some lunch before a walk up to Langley Abbey to have a look around the ruins and get some long horn beef from the shop for BBQ tonight. Rhythm of Hamm returned with Tom and more runner beans, yummy. We had yet another lovely evening on the bank, a first for some this year. Talk of heavy rain and strong winds tomorrow and a possible plan b if unable to cross Breydon as planned.

Friday

Not too bad a day at all, certainly not the howling gale we all thought we would get. Helen & Rosie had gone home the night before in case the weather was bad so as not to risk crossing Breydon with them as they had to be home on Saturday. Slack water in the yacht station was 4.00pm so we left Langley about 12.00 after early lunch. Poked our bowsprits out of the dyke to find actually it wasn't too bad at all and put the sails up. Sailed all the way to Reedham and found the bridge closed and boats milling around. Helen rang through to the bridge and was told after the next train he would open for 5 minutes. The train came more or less as soon as she told everyone and we all turned and headed full speed for the bridge. As promised he opened and we all made it through. Carried on sailing all the way down and right across Breydon, conditions were perfect for us. Arrived at Breydon Bridge with about 10mins to spare, just enough time to get the sails & mast down ready. Ripple & Chariot had gone though a little bit before us and Ripple headed straight up to Duffers. Chariot was waiting at Marina Keys for the tide and hopefully a little wind. The tide eventually came but no wind. Unfortunately the rain came instead and about 5 minutes before duffers the heavens opened. As if that wasn't bad enough there were two Gin Palaces on the mooring and we all had to double up. Despite the weather we had a lovely evening, Gary had cooked tea on the way up from Yarmouth as I now had the better wet weather gear, and I must say that is the first time I have been so wet and not had wet trousers underneath. Caroline said she had never been so wet, but she was laughing at the time so I don't think she minded too much. Had a night cap once we were ship shape and not too late to bed.

Saturday

Ripple had to be away early as they were returning home, but we were staying out for the bank holiday weekend, hopefully to be joined by some weekend sailors. Unfortunately we were head to wind again and decided to motor to Acle, not too far to go and it meant we could stock up in Acle for the coming weekend. After a spot of lunch we all set off for the town, some stopping for liquid refreshments and the footie on the big screen. Had a lovely wander around Acle, a bit of shopping and joined the boys for a cider. Well! Had a bit of a flush, think they must be putting something odd in the cider these days, can't be having flushes at my age, can I? Anyway managed to make it back to the boat and had a wash and brush up and changed for dinner. Tonight we were eating in the Hermitage at Acle, a lovely seafood restaurant that comes highly recommended. Well that is the food and the service, the booking for more than six people is a bit more complicated. The short story is it took 3 separate people to book 3 separate tables to accommodate 15 people, crazy or what! Anyway we did it and eventually we had all eaten, albeit at three separate times but we had all eaten, not together but all in the same restaurant. Sonia, Pat, Allan & David Beeken all joined us by car. Night caps on Mezereon, well actually I think it was teas, coffee & hot chocolate but lovely all the same.

Sunday

It was a bit windy this morning and although we were heading for Upton for the night we had planned a sail about during the day followed by lunch at Oby Mill. We then decided we would be blown on at Oby Mill and bearing in mind the wind decided to head for Womack Island instead. We motored through Acle Bridge and moored at the shop, Gary wanted more maggots and they have a machine across the road at the Bridge Inn. We were head to wind at the shop so decided to put our nose in the reeds at Northern Rivers headquarters and put the sails up. It was quite windy but thought we would be ok without a reef as we could spill the wind if needs be. We shot off down the river like a cork out of a bottle, it didn't seem that windy but we were shifting. Mark, Rita & Steven had travelled down from Rugby that morning, bless them and they were just about to leave their mooring as we came past. We dropped the sails just after Thurne windmill and motored into Womack, just managing to squeeze into the middle of the mooring between two other boats and a lovely family out with their day boat & canoe. We soon had four boats all side by side on Womack Island and settled down for some lunch together in the sunshine. This was not too last and soon we were hit by a shower, then a heavier one, but they didn't last long. It gave us time to wash up anyway. Soon on our way again and left the other boats to their quiet afternoon. Rigged ready to sail again and upon emerging from Womack Dyke, put the sails up, this lasted about 5 minutes and soon put them down again, it was gusting too much and motored down to Upton for shelter. Sonia came out by car for tea & cakes and we had a lovely afternoon out of the wind. Good old tinned chilli for tea and night caps on Mezereon, rounded off a really lovely weeks cruising.

Monday

We had to leave early as the water was high and we needed to get though Potter Bridge, returning to Sonia's again till the next cruise. Paul Reynolds came out for the day with us and we motored up to Potter to find only 6ft at the bridge. After taking the weights of the end of the mast Gary rested it on his shoulder and with quiet a strong cross wind headed for the bridge, not much to spare and made it without incident. Moored up at Deep Go Dyke to put a reef in and try one of our recently acquired jibs out. We managed to get the reef in ok and after a few goes at the jib at different heights and the jib sheet in various places set off under sail for Hickling. Had a great sail all the way down the broad and back onto White Sleas for lunch. Had lunch in the sunshine and decided to go back for a second go in the afternoon. We were joined by Reedling and set off again under sail. This time we did not get so far, about a third of the way down Hickling, not particularly windy and the main sail let go just above the reefing point, opps!!!!. Had to happen sooner or later bless her she must be between 30 & 40 years old. Limped back to White Sleas and moored under the wind to remove the main sail ready to be taken to Jeckell's later in the week for repair. Luckily they were not too busy and could look at her straight away, unfortunately they have refused to repair her as the stitching is rotten. Only one course of action now and they have promised me a new one before the next cruise, fingers crossed all goes well and look forward to seeing you all afloat again soon.

Linda Doughty

September 2011