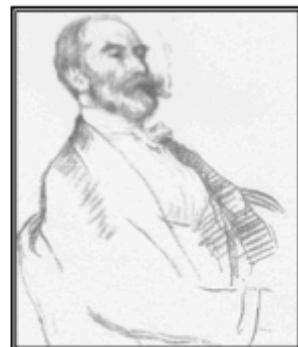


Chapter 2

The Norfolk Punt Club

In August 1926, Arthur Bachelor of Albermarle Road, Norwich started some lively correspondence in the Eastern Daily Press about Norfolk Punts. It quickly became apparent that interest was widespread and a meeting was held at the Bridewell in Norwich on Saturday 11th December 1926. Present were: Arthur Bachelor, W.Britton, A.T.Chittock, H.W.Crotch, J.ff Edge, C.R.Howlett, W.F.Jermy, H.J.Starling and Herbert Woods. They decided to form The Norfolk Punt Club. The objective of their new club was "to preserve and if possible, improve the traditional local type of punt and to encourage competitions in quanting, rowing and sailing of same." Arthur Bachelor was asked to write to the Eastern Daily Press giving notice of a further meeting to be held the following Saturday, 18th December 1926, to discuss the necessary constitutional details. At this meeting, Harold Morris was elected the first commodore; Arthur Bachelor vice commodore and Herbert Woods took the junior flag rank. Jack ffiske Edge of Holm Close, Brundall became the club's first honorary secretary and treasurer. (His son, Pat Edge later raced an Ajax at Lowestoft) The first club year (1927) book lists seventeen members.



Arthur Bachelor
- a self portrait.

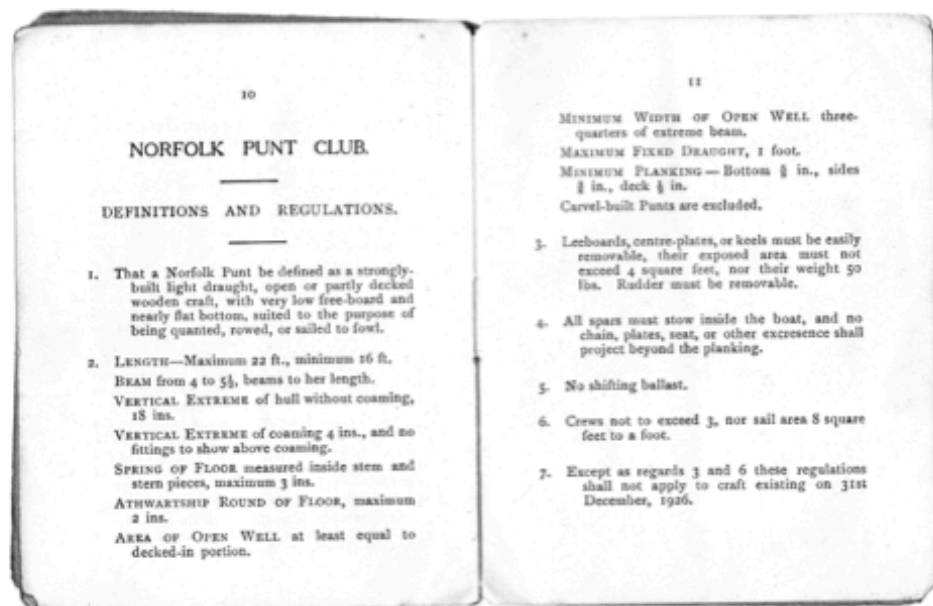
courtesy: Hugh Wylam

The club lost no time in measuring existing Norfolk Punts and formulating class rules for new boats. Overall length was permitted to vary between sixteen feet and twenty two feet; and in common with the National Fourteen foot dinghy class, spars had to stow within the hull. This restriction virtually imposed a gunter sloop rig, although some early boats persisted with a balanced lug. Sail area was restricted to eight square feet, per foot of overall length. The maximum cost of the hull was fixed at £2 per foot of overall length and the cost of all other gear could not exceed £15: 15s: 0d. The cost of a twenty two foot punt was effectively limited to £60. A handicap system was agreed of ten seconds per foot of overall length.



Harold Morris
Commodore
1926 - 1930

photo: Stewart Morris collection



**The first set of class rules,
published in the 1927
club hand book.**

The courtesy: Robert Malster

new club lost no time in building new punts and Horace Bolingbroke commissioned *Scud* from William Mollett of Bishopgate in Norwich. She was finished in February 1927 and cost a princely £27: 0s: 0d.

32 Bishopgate
 NORWICH. Feb 27 1927
 H. Bolingbroke Esq
Dr. to W. E. MOLLETT,
BOAT BUILDER.
 REPAIRS OF EVERY DESCRIPTION.
 BOATS HOUSED. * MOTOR LAUNCHES AND BOATS FOR HIRE.

To Building 18' x 4' 3" Gun Boat	
Materials	
Bottom planking 3/4 Red Wood	
Side " 7/8 Whit Wood	
Decks & stern 1/2 Red "	
Horn & Stern Post Oak	
Timbers Beams Coaming Oak	
Galv Nail to Timbers	
Copper Nails & Screws for Planking	
Brass Screws	
Centre Plate & Rudders Iron Galv	
Pole Mast Bamboo Spars	
Clton Sheet Manila Kalyards	
Straight Paddles Oak or Fir	
Galv Rowlocks	
Union Lint by Rudders & Ruyings	
3 Coats Paint Color as desired	
or Painted & Varnished "	
Estimate Mt to Excut £ 27	
Received on A/c	10
Feb 27 1927	
W. E. Mollett	



Horace and Ciceley
 Bolingbroke sailing *Scud*.

photo: Robert Malster

In the summer of 1928, *Scud* was taken on a Broads adventure. First she travelled along the North Walsham & Dilham Canal.



North Walsham & Dilham Canal.

***Scud* at Dee bridge between Honing and Dilham.**

photo: Robert Malster



North Walsham & Dilham Canal.

***Scud* above Austin Bridge 21.6.28.**

photo: Robert Malster

They were able to reach just above Swafield. Robert Malster recalls Horace telling him that the trip was hard work and the photograph album of the voyage records broken down locks even in those days. *Scud* was a heavy old boat and had to be carried across unusable locks and weirs. Unsatisfied with the North Walsham & Dilham Canal, Horace and an unidentified crew set off to see how far they could reach along the upper Bure.



***Scud* was towed to the Rising Sun, Coltishall behind Horace Bolingbroke's motorcycle. 14.7.28.**

photo: Robert Malster

Aylsham had once been accessible to wherries and the pair reached Burgh next Aylsham. A rig that fitted inside the hull must have been a great advantage for portage and camping on board.



Scud at Cradle Bridge,
Burgh next Aylsham.

photo: Robert Malster



Ted Ellis

photo: Eastern Daily Press

Ted Ellis, the local naturalist and protege of Arthur Patterson, inherited Patterson's affection for punts and bought *Scud* to use at Wheatfen. Ellis typed the manuscript of 'Wildfowling and Poachers' for Patterson, who said of his young assistant: "Young Ellis has the eyes and ears of a hawk and the optimism of Sancho Panza." Many years later, Ted was asked by Beryl Tooley, Patterson's great-granddaughter, to write a foreword to his biography: "Fifty years after his death, it gives me great pleasure to contribute this brief foreword to a well researched account of his life by one of his great granddaughters, in whose eyes, from time to time, I catch a glimpse of my old hero."

Ted somehow never got quite so misty eyed about boats. He bought the small, carvel pleasure wherry *Liberty* to sink across the entrance to Wheatfen, where she remains to this day. In 1969, he advised the class that the old *Scud* had become "an unusable hulk".



With over seven hundred members in the 1890s, the Yare Sailing Club had claimed to be the largest sailing club in the world but propelled by improved personal transport and the new sugar beet factory at Cantley, Broads yachting began to migrate steadily to the North Rivers. By 1924, Horning Town S.C. had become the largest club boasting over four hundred members. Yacht racing on the Broads between the wars was very different from the territorial affairs we know today. The Royal Norfolk & Suffolk Yacht Club was alone in enjoying their own premises; despite only rarely racing from Lowestoft.

THURSDAY, JULY 19th,
Norfolk Punt Club Regatta.
 Start 10-30 a.m.

Held under the Rules of the Norfolk and Suffolk Yacht Association.

-
- Race 1. NORFOLK BROADS & YARE AND BURE O.D.C. Sweepstakes
 Entry Fee 5/-
- Race 2. NORFOLK GUN PUNTS, Classes A and B.
- Race 3. 14 ft. NATIONAL DINGHIES. Sweepstakes.
 Entry Fee 5/-
- Race 4. NORFOLK GUN PUNTS, Classes A and B. (Invitation Race.)
- Race 5. HALF-DECKED RESTRICTED CLASS & GL. YARMOUTH ONE
 DESIGN CLASS SAILS. Sweepstakes. Entry Fee 5/-
- Race 6. NORFOLK GUN PUNTS, Classes A and B. (Ladies to steer.)
- Reading, Printer, St. John, Norwich. C. K. HOWLETT, Hon. Sec.

By 1928, the Norfolk Punt Club were pleased to be invited to organise a day at Wroxham Regatta.

Most local clubs ran their regattas at a wide variety of Broads locations and often on consecutive days. Yachtsmen usually belonged to several clubs and it was not uncommon to find individuals serving as officers of two simultaneously. In 1932, Byron V. Noel was commodore of both the Norfolk Punt Club and Horning Town Sailing Club. Racing, whilst keen, was carried out in a gentlemanly manner amongst friends. The secretary of the Great Yarmouth Yacht Club in 1932 was A.T.Chittock and nineteen Norfolk Punts were owned by their members. A typical programme might include cruiser races, split into two starts (large and small), White boats, Brown boats and Yarmouth one designs, Norfolk Punts, International and Norfolk fourteen foot dinghies and an open & half decked class. Turnouts for individual races were not high and only three or four entries not uncommon. The casual observer might have to look at the burgee flying over the Yare & Bure S.C.houseboat to work out which club was running the racing on a particular day.



far left
 Y&BSC Houseboat at
 Wroxham Broad.

*photo: Norfolk Broads
 Yacht Club*

left
 The Y&BSC houseboat on
 its way to Beccles.

photo: Ken. Clabburn

Lunch on board the Y&BSC houseboat. I to r. Sir E.J. (Jack) Mann, Mrs. W.L. Clabburn and Byron V. Noel - N.P.C. commodore from 1930 - 1936.



photo: Ken. Clabburn

The Yare and Bure Sailing Club houseboat was towed by a launch strapped alongside (with some difficulty) to regattas by their steward, William Yardley and used by most clubs to run their racing. Other clubs were charged six guineas a day for use of the facility. Yardley served drinks, cold lunches and teas aboard, fired the guns and broke out and lowered the race flags; whilst the race committee ran their races from the roof of the houseboat. On regatta days a gun was fired at 0800 for vessels to make colours and another at sunset to strike them. All of the larger boats attending regattas would have paid hands on board and this ceremony was punctiliously observed - a nice piece of flag etiquette that seems to have largely disappeared.

Charles Carrodus was Eastern Daily Press, Yachting Correspondent for thirty years and a Yachting Monthly columnist. He was elected an honorary member of the Norfolk Punt Club in 1933.



photo: Horace Grant

Charles Carrodus noted one July that there was not a day without a regatta until September 5th. The fleet started out in early July at Wroxham with three consecutive days organised by the Royal Norfolk & Suffolk Y.C., the Great Yarmouth Y.C. and the Yare & Bure S.C., followed by three days at Thurne Mouth run by the Y.&B.S.C. and Horning Town Sailing Club. The circuit progressed to Acle for two days organised by the Y.&B.S.C. and Gt.Y.Y.C., finishing with a passage race to Horning on Wednesday. Thursday and Friday were Wroxham Open regatta and from 1932, the punts raced from Wood's Dyke in Horning to Brown's Hill on the Ant on their way back for Barton Open Regatta on August Bank Holiday Monday. (then in early August). Tea was provided on the lawn at Brown's Hill, a house that Byron V. Noel built at Ludham. Noel was one of Lord Byron's Christian names. The couple died without issue, so the family should not be upset to hear Mrs. Noel described as "fat, plain and Scots" by a distant relation! The following Tuesday, the punts raced from Potter Heigham to Hickling for the Open regatta on Wednesday. Thursday was traditionally Potter Heigham regatta. On Friday, the Punt class held their own regatta at Hickling and the rest of the fleet moved down to the south rivers for Beccles, Oulton and Lowestoft Sea Week.

Following the racing fleet was a flotilla of larger yachts, wherries and houseboats that accommodated their owners and friends for the summer in some style. Most had a paid hand or two to look after the boats and cook. Many kept good cellars and an invitation to dinner on board ensured a good evening. Races for Norfolk Punts were quickly included in most regattas on the North rivers as the new club was quickly absorbed into the circuit. The class was a mixture of the well-to-do and the not so well-off, who often built their own punts. The Morris family had the counter sterned, motor wherry *Sundog*, A.T.Chittock *Caister Maid*, a converted Yarmouth beach yawl and the Fitt family owned a large motor cruiser called *Dawn*. As each regatta finished, the fleet moved to the next venue.



**Y&BSC regatta. Acle.
Monday July 29th 1930.**

***Prawn* gets the best of a start at Acle. Stewart Morris is crewed by Peter Scott.**

photo: Stewart Morris



**far left
Horning Town Regatta.**

photo: Desmond Truman collection



**left
Trout owned by Eric Morris (brother of Harold) at Horning regatta. September 1928.**

photo: Ken. Clabburn



Betty Chittock, crewed by 'Young' Walter Woods for the Ladies race at Horning regatta in 1929.

photo: Judy Macdonald (nee Sturgess) and Peter Sturgess

right
Flight at Horning.

photo: Ken. Clabburn

far right
Rushlight.

photo: Peter Tracey



Herbert Woods bought this trophy with *Flight's* winnings during her first season.

photo: Jennifer Woods

Barton Regatta 1929.

William Jermy sailing *Pintail*. The wherry is *Cornu copia*. The large flag above her Jenny Morgan is a 'winners flag' and indicates she had won the wherry race.

photo: Hugh Tusting



right
Rushlight and *Flight*.

photo: Stewart Morris collection

far right
Gerald Sturgess and his fiancée, Betty Chittock sailing *Swallow*.

photo: cover 1973 NPC Handbook



In 1929, Herbert Woods designed and built his first punt, the twenty foot *Flight*. Gerald Sambrooke Sturgess later described Woods as "an experienced helm, a good designer and a clever salesman." His punts made their debut on the first day of Wroxham Week and each one marked a significant improvement in performance over the last. In 1930 he produced *Rushlight* and in 1931, *Spotlight*.



Hickey.

photo: courtesy East Anglian Cruising Club

In 1930, C.E.Howard built himself *Hickey*, which became number 11 in the class. She has never raced but can usually be seen moored near the Pleasure Boat at Hickling. In the photograph she's being sailed by Charlie Howard and his great-nephew Cecil Howard. In 1947, Cecil and his brother Bert founded the Green Wyvern Sailing Club and latterly Cecil became a stalwart of the River Cruiser Class. The family could be nicely described as eccentric; a pencilled note on this photograph indicated that Great Uncle Charlie believed the earth to be flat. Right up to his death Cecil was asked to present the Cecil Howard Memorial trophy for River Cruisers, sailed on the River Yare as a 'feeder race' for the the Yare Navigation Race.



far left
Even old lugsails find a use in cold weather.
Stewart Morris is standing on the right on Hickling Broad.

photo: Stewart Morris collection



left
George Fitt rowing two out of three of the Misses Fitt across Barton Broad.

photo: Hugh Tusting

**Barton Regatta
1931.**

Swallow has her new number 6. A magnifying glass is required to detect that the International 14 in the right of the photograph is K215 *Clover* - Stewart Morris' first 14.

photo: Hugh Tusting



Uffa Fox built his only Norfolk Punt, *Stint*, for Sir Edward Stracey of Rackheath Hall in 1929. He joined two sections of mast together with duralium tubing (like a fishing rod, as he had on his famous 14 *Avenger* the previous year) and *Stint* became the first bermudan rigged punt. She was built to the minimum length of sixteen feet, as Uffa was confident she would win on corrected time. (Time allowance was twelve seconds per foot l.o.a.) There is an apocryphal Potter Heigham story about Uffa racing *Stint* from Potter to the Pleasure Boat at Hickling against Herbert Woods, presumably in *Flight*. Uffa failed to win on corrected time and folklore has Woods wagering a fiver that he could still beat Uffa back to Potter without a rudder - steering with his sails. Herbert Woods was said to have retained the fiver for some time!



Uffa Fox

photo: Stewart Morris
collection

Uffa had many local customers and returned to race *Spotlight* at Potter Heigham regatta in 1931 but he never really came to terms with Norfolk Punts which; in view of his involvement with International Canoes, was a lost opportunity. He had developed an expensive method of construction using double skinned, Honduras mahogany, separated with canvas (later oiled silk), with Canadian rock elm timbers on two inch centres throughout the hull. By the standards of the day, the results were fast and stiff but only the wealthy were able to afford them. Gerald Sambrooke Sturgess later wrote that Uffa thought of Norfolk Punts as "heavy and sailed by marshmen in thigh boots" but it seems more likely that he saw a small class that included a number of amateur built boats with a price effectively restricted to £60. Building twenty two foot punts can hardly have seemed attractive, when his fourteen foot dinghies fetched over £150. Doubtless it was coincidental that several punt owners also kept large motor cruisers at the yards that built their Norfolk Punts. Uffa was again approached after the Second World War to design a Norfolk Punt but sold his customer an International 10 sq. metre canoe. The canoe frightened the poor man so much, he disposed of it cheaply to a young enthusiast after less than a season.

In 1930, the class introduced sail numbers, although their allocation wasn't entirely logical. The commodore ensured *Shrimp* became number 1. *Prawn* was allocated number 19, as Harold Morris had shipped an old rig from his Restricted Norfolk 14, *Take-a-Step*. George Fitt took sail number 21 for *Flight* for the same reason. Once the National 14 class was established, the Norfolk fleet was allocated a new block of numbers: 38 - 60. It may have been expedient but it took the Norfolk Punt class several years to fill in the inevitable gaps. The annual meeting that year spent some time trying to decide whether handicaps should be based on length or performance.



Start of the Sundog Cup race at the Norfolk Punt Club regatta at Hickling in 1930.

left to right the Punts are: - *Stint, Bittern, Scoulton Cob, Swallow, Rushlight, Prawn, Flight, Pochar, Swift.*

photo: Stewart Morris collection



left *Prawn* sets a spinnaker.

right *Prawn* well reefed on Wroxham Broad. The family wherry *Sundog* is in the background of both shots.

photos: Stewart Morris collection

The Broads regatta seasons continued as busily as ever. The Norfolk Punt class raced for the Ardea trophy at Potter Heigham, which had been presented by Howard Hollingsworth. *Ardea* was a large pleasure wherry, built for Hollingsworth as a job creation scheme in 1927 by Leo Robinson at Oulton Broad - he chose the latin name of a heron for his new boat. She was sixty five feet long and built from teak rather than local oak. *Ardea* was taken to Paris in 1959 to provide living accommodation but returned to the Broads in 2005 having spent most of her life in France. Her lines are very slightly different to a traditional wherry and gnarled old hands were heard muttering after her launch: "You can't steam teak".



The Ardea trophy, won outright by Herbert Woods in 1933.

photo: Jennifer Woods

Ardea

photo: Claud Hamilton

Herbert Woods in
Spotlight at Potter
Heigham regatta.

photo: Jennifer Woods



Herbert Woods built *Spotlight* for the 1931 season. He helmed her first race himself but R.O. Bond, a Norwich architect and a successful sailor at both local and national events, was a regular 'jockey' in many of Woods boats. Later in his life, Bond became doyen of the Lowestoft Dragon fleet and served as commodore of the Royal Norfolk & Suffolk Yacht Club for several years.

The same year, the class joined the Norfolk Dinghy Club for their passage race from Horning to Thurne. The Norfolk Punt Club held their regatta at the Horning Town Sailing Club and were responsible for running a days racing during Wroxham Week, which continued for many years after the formation of the Norfolk Broads Y.C.



Herbert Woods

photo: Jennifer Woods

1932 witnessed the first rumblings over hull measurement. *Spotlight* was found to have a rise of floor of $47/8$ " instead of $31/3$ " and her overall beam had increased by 2". *Swallow* had a rocker of $37/8$ " instead of a maximum 3". Both boats had measured when they were built and the committee accepted Messrs Woods and Chittock's explanation that the changes may have been caused by supporting the boats on their ends when they were hauled out. No further action was to be taken beyond requiring that all Punts were to be measured every season!

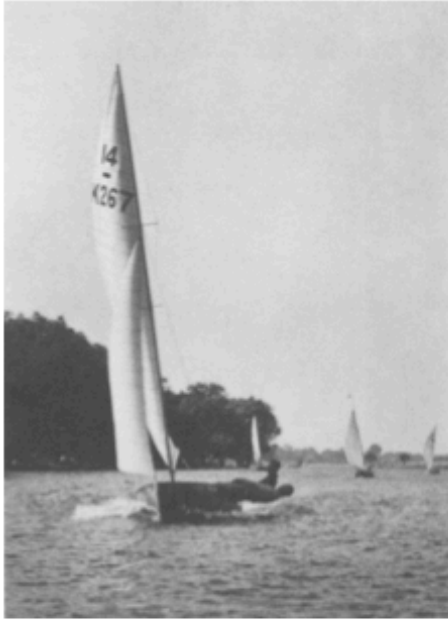
New rules agreed in September 1932, required new punts to measure twenty two feet overall but permitted masts of similar length. Herbert Woods built *Dodman* and *Mickey* to these rules for the 1933 season. *Shuck* and *Pintail* replaced their old tabernacle stepped bamboo masts with longer metal masts, as did *Stannicle* later in the season. Her steel mast was $15/8$ " section but the spar folded whilst hoisting at a windy Acle regatta and was replaced with a conventional wooden spar. There were several new boats in the fleet for the 1933 season. William Mollett built *Cavender* and raced her himself for much of the summer. Carrodus noted sniffily that her bright yellow colour was felt not to be in keeping with the the Norfolk Punt tradition. His declaration that *Cavender* was "rigged in accordance with Dr. Manfred Currey's theories" is enough to strike terror and dismay into the hearts of modern yachtsmen.



Robert Bond

photo: Authors collection

Pochard raced at Hickling and despite developments, *Prawn* was still able to win on handicap. At Thurne regatta in 1933, Stewart Morris once again took the silverware; although he had imported some rule bending from the International 14 fleet. There was great debate over the unmeasured area of her foresail extending aft of the mast. His Morgan Giles 14 *Clover* was followed by *RIP*, a dinghy that an ailing Harold Morris had ordered from Uffa Fox. The Prince of Wales Cup for International Fourteens was then the UK's premier dinghy competition and Stewart Morris, crewed by his elder brother Jack, became the first Norfolk Punt Club member to win a national event when they won the Prince of Wales Cup in 1932 and 1933, sailing *RIP*.



It wasn't to be long before more of Stewart Morris' Cambridge friends began to race the family fleet of Broads boats. Peter Scott and John Winter began to appear in the results. Beecher Moore (later to become Jack Holt's partner) crewed *Prawn* for the 1933 season. Moore is credited with the first trapeze (which he called the "bellrope") developments on his Thames 'A' rater *Vagabond*. Scott and Winter developed the trapeze to good effect in 14s in 1938. The East Anglian 14 contingent were already strong but Stewart Morris' small group of wealthy friends from Cambridge University came to dominate British dinghy racing for the next twenty years.

It's a shame that Potter Heigham regatta has ceased. It was a major competition for the Punt class and a significant local event, now in danger of fading from memory. Charles Carrodus, wrote in his inimitable style from the wherry *Zulu* in 1933:

"No writer yet born has ever done justice to this great festival, or attempted to do so. After studying the subject for years, he gives the results of the sailing matches and the swimming events; then dismisses the rest of the day as baffling description and passes on to the next regatta, feeling like an inadequate scribe. But it is a day of immense crowds, usually not less than 5,000, of huge parking grounds on both sides of the river, of miles of moored yachts on each bank, both above and below the bridge and of a starting line for yacht racing packed with joyous holidaymakers, and crowded more than ever for the swimming. It is all music and gaiety, laughter and cheers and this year it was again a brilliant finish to the Bure season." He went on to record music from a steam organ on one bank, whilst "Captain J. Collier of Norwich Aero Club gave a display of aerobatics. The day ended with fireworks on Mr. Pratt's meadow." There were about fifty entries a day for yacht racing and the results generally carried some familiar names: "Jack Powles of Wroxham won the one oared race, whilst Nat Bircham won the race for skippers in yacht's dinghies belonging to hired craft."



far left
R.I.P. sailed by Jack and Stewart Morris.

photo: Stewart Morris collection



W.L. 'Bey' Clabburn was a member of the NPC committee and audited the club's accounts for several years. He served as secretary of the Norfolk & Suffolk Yachting Association for thirty years.

photo: Ken. Clabburn

Barrel race at Potter Heigham regatta.

photo: Back to the Broads, David Holmes

As the 1933 season drew to a close the simmering row over hull measurement came to a head. In May, W.F.Jermy, the class measurer had reported that, on measuring the original *Scoter* for admission to the class, he had found her 'spring of bottom' (rocker) was 1 1/2" too great and also that her 'round of bottom' (rise of floor) was too much. *Scoter* was not a new boat and had been built by C.J.Broom of Brundall in 1929. The committee decided that the rocker would have to be reduced to under the maximum three inches and Herbert Woods sketched out a way to achieve this without major structural alteration. Shortly afterwards, *Swallow* and *Rushlight* were re-measured and also found to have excess rocker. Both boats were altered by Herbert Woods and passed by the official measurer. *Swallow* was rebuilt to ensure she measured - something which Gerald Sambrooke Sturgess claimed ruined her performance but Woods fixed tapered lengths of timber under the bows alongside the hog to the other boats to reduce their rocker. When the commodore, Byron V. Noel and vice commodore T.F. Mase saw what Herbert Woods had done to the boats, they refused to accept his interpretation of the rules. A special committee meeting was called, which developed into a long and heated argument. When a vote was finally taken, Herbert Woods won the vote by four votes to three. Both Flag officers immediately resigned their flag rank and membership of the club. The class had certainly got itself into a considerable muddle. *Winkle*, built for Byron V. Noel and resplendent in bright blue paint didn't measure either - the boat had double the permitted rise of floor. *Flight*, *Mickey*, *Scoulton Cob* and *Spotlight* were also found to have measurement deficiencies.

Punts that had measured when they were built had gradually developed increased rocker. Hindsight is a wonderful gift and Woods was probably correct that punts were being driven harder than their original, gunter rigged design had allowed. By the same token, it is almost impossible to be objective about boatbuilding standards after so many years. Broads sailing craft were probably built with a twenty five year life expectancy and crucially, the Norfolk Punt class rules intended punts to be built down to a price. A number of local boatbuilders would be amazed if they could see how many of their products were still sailing around the Broads. Barton broad too was changing. The Victorians could see three churches from the broad but the rapidly growing trees were quickly obscuring the view.



Clouds, sails & a big sky.
This shot of an Allcomers start looks like a Hickling Regatta during the 1930s. There is no excuse for its inclusion beyond being a nice photograph.

photo: Hugh Tusting

NORFOLK PUNT CLUB.

The Annual General Meeting of the Club, will be held at St. Andrew's Parish Hall (next Theatre de Luxe) St. Andrew's, Norwich, on Monday, the 18th of September, at 4 p.m., when it is hoped you will be able to attend.

G. SAMBROOKE STURGESS,

Hon. Secretary.

74, Upper St. Giles' Street,
Norwich.

AGENDA.

1. To hear and confirm the Minutes of the last Meeting.
2. Election of Officers.
3. Election of Committee.
4. Appointment of new Hon. Secretary.
5. A proposal by Mr. Byron V. Noel, seconded by Mr. T. F. Mase, to enforce the present rules and disqualify boats which did not conform during the current season.
6. A proposal to re-draft the Building Rules and Regulations.
7. A proposal by Mr. A. T. Chittock, seconded by Mr. G. S. Sturgess, "That in future, Sail Area shall be measured by the present V.R.A. Rules."
8. A proposal to adopt a one-design hull for future boats.
9. Any other business.

The 1933 Annual General Meeting saw the resignation of Gerald Sambrooke Sturgess as Honourary Secretary in view of his imminent marriage and the first public airing of the possibility of one design punts. Stewart Morris' proposal that owners who agreed to modify their punts should not face retrospective disqualification was carried unanimously.



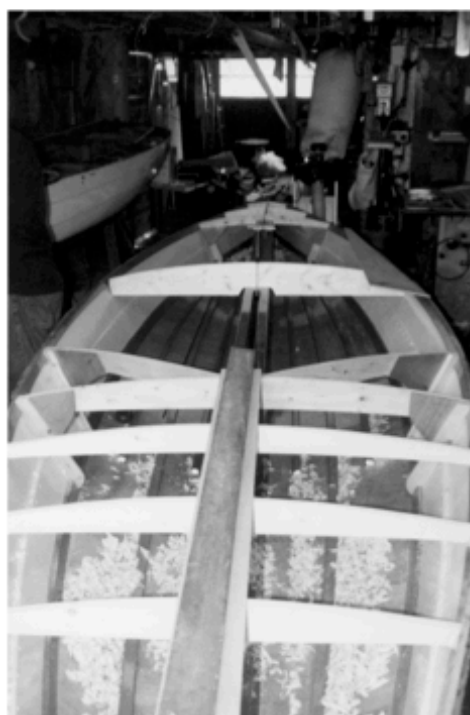
S.H. Morris.



The Broads Haven Trophy - presented to the class by Herbert Woods in 1932 but withdrawn the following year during the measurement row.

photo: Jennifer Woods

The best post script to the measurement fiasco is that the original *Scoter* was finally allowed to join the class in 1967. Renamed *Goldeneye* she was allocated the number 25, originally held by the *Grimes Snipe*.



Goldeneye in Paul Bown's workshop in 2005, where she has been completely rebuilt for the Rev. Neville Khambatta. Only the top two planks on either side remain of Broom's original work.

photo: Author

The Norfolk Punt Club had found kindred spirits in the new Norfolk Dinghy Club, another single class club but still only in its second season. Robert Bond was a leading light and the dinghy club laid on Norfolk Punt races at their fixtures. The two clubs were close enough for Bond to arrange for the Norfolk Dinghy Club to sail a team race against Trent Valley S.C. at Thurne Mouth in Punts. When the possibility arose of a number of punts being outclassed by the Norfolk Punt Club, the Norfolk Dinghy Club debated at their AGM whether to formally adopt the class to provide a home for rejected punts. Robert Bond was in favour and George Fitt declared that "Punts offered sailing at the same speed as a rater at half the cost." In the event, Cdr. Newcombe persuaded the dinghy club to wait and see. The debate clearly demonstrates not only the vulnerability of single class clubs but also how closely interwoven the Broads clubs were at the time. Cdr. Newcombe's daughter, Rosemarie Lincoln, raced her Norfolk Dinghy *Mardler* for another sixty five years. The measurement row limited club activity during 1934 but all restrictions on mast height were removed. William Mollett built *Blue Dar* for E.N.Adcock and Herbert Woods produced *Sardine* for Captain C.B.Wilson of Irstead Lodge. Apart from the ill-starred *Stint*, *Sardine* was the first punt to have a properly built bermudan rigged mast with internal halyards and winches. The Wilson family entertained the club to lunch on the lawn at Irstead Lodge, which overlooked the south end of the Broad. The lunch became an annual occasion and food was delivered in hampers by Fortnum and Mason. Free flowing alcohol is reported to have made performances in the afternoon races "variable."



Tom Scott crewing
Capt. Wilson in
Sardine.

photo: Peter Tracey

Irstead Lodge subsequently burnt down but Capt. Charles Wilson claimed to own part of Barton Broad. The rest of the broad was claimed by Leslie Storey, who lived in a large house called 'Burefield', beside Horning church. The house had immaculate gardens running down to the river, set out like a willow pattern plate. Even the tie-bars in the quayheading ended in the letter 'S'. Passers by sometimes caught a glimpse of some strange animals in the garden that presumably helped to keep the acres of grass down. They were described as 'Shoats'; a cross between a sheep and a goat. Happily for the Norfolk Punt Club, both men were keen yachtsmen.



Burefield.

photo: Authors collection

If 1934 saw reduced turnouts for racing, it also witnessed another epic voyage by a Norfolk Punt. Lt. Cdr. S.A. Brookes RN, on leave from Singapore, decided to circumnavigate the rivers Wensum and Bure with his wife in *Bittern*. The trip was written up by the Eastern Daily Press on June 27th & 28th 1934, reproduced by Julia Carter in the 1977 club handbook and here with the Editor's permission.

"Bittern is a 20' sailing punt with a beam of no more than 4'10", a draught of four inches and as to tonnage, she taxes the the lifting power of four strong men. Sail area is 160 square feet and the centreplate weighs 49lbs. She was designed for mudlarking as well as for racing and built for us by Alfred Pegg & Sons, five years ago. She has proved herself far too solid and heavy for racing but splendid for sailing in heavy weather. It was after my husband's return from Singapore in April that he had the brainwave of doing this trip. We were sailing on Barton and in some danger of capsizing - when he suggested it and soon we had made all the preparations to leave Norwich for the upper reaches of Wensum, returning home by the upper reaches of the Bure.

Bittern was taken by lorry to Norwich and launched by kind permission of Mr. Anderson from his garden, which was the nearest suitable place we could find to City Station (Queens Road, Norwich, currently the site of Sainsbury's Brazengate store). We carried two sleeping bags, a tent, spare clothing, food and cooking gear, so there hardly seemed room for us.

We set off at about five o'clock, paddling past the Wensum and Swan baths and had our first pull out at Hellesdon, where a hard slope had been specially built for boats, as this is apparently a common hunting ground for Norwich rowers. It turned very cloudy, a cold and miserable night. We took turns in towing along the banks which were piled with mud from recent dredging. We stopped in some woods when tired out.

The boat was too full even for a bicycle pump, so my pneumatic mattress was inflated by cheek-bursting. I tried to sleep in the punt but rolled off the mattress, hit myself on the centre-board casing and felt a martyr. It was a cold, windy morning and I washed *Bittern* down - mud everywhere. Sailing was impossible, as reefing was necessary and she would have got so wet that everything on board would have suffered - this meant towing along the muddy banks and through high nettles. The scenery improved and we met no other craft, which we found an enjoyable change from the lower rivers.

Near Costessey we struck our first bad patch of mud and found towing through it very hot work in the mid-day sun; there were thousands of tadpoles in the shallows and mayfly on the water.

After a laborious haul out at Costessey (unaided except by rollers and a tackle) we sailed to the village; all the ducks and swans fled in alarm in front of us. At the inn we saw a marvellous mug fashioned like a skull. It was German and was brought from the canteen of the Death's Head Hussars. The inn keeper had a fine collection of medals and regimental accoutrements.

Lt. Cdr. Sam Brookes RN, later of Transatlantic and Bermuda race fame learned to sail in *Bittern*, a punt owned by his father. These photographs have been scanned from the Eastern Daily Press of the day. Old newspaper photographs regrettably no longer reflect today's standards of reproduction.



*photos:
Eastern Daily Press*

I fell asleep while steering, so we pulled up close to Taverham and made camp in a lovely meadow. We found our way to Capt. Lloyd's for permission to pull out next morning and he was most kind and helpful. That night S. slept in the punt and I in the tent. I broke all the rules of camping by taking a hot water bottle to bed. Taverham Mill, now disused is a very pretty place; we passed onto the hills and trees of Ringland and the scenery was topping. We talked to the people in their riverside gardens and they seemed very surprised to see a boat. S. asked about fishing and was told that trout were common: he discussed suitable flies, suggesting mayfly but was told that "a good old lugworm is the best."

Ringland ford was the first part (of many) that was so shallow that we had to get out and push. Soon after this we met our first barbed-wire obstruction - strands of wire fitted across the river to prevent cattle wandering upstream, and shortly after this three trees fallen right across the river. Our pleasant camp at Attlebridge was marred by great pain from the nettle stings, which kept me awake all night. From here to Lenwade we found many more shoals, crowds of nettles, more low bridges and a very low tree across the river, but the countryside was very pretty.

While at Lenwade, by kind permission of Mr. Bullard, S. spent many hours waving a fishing rod but owing to lack of either skill or lugworms, he failed to provide a trout for supper. Though the inn and mill were Lenwade, the post-office, only a hundred yards away was Great Witchingham. We had a difficult pull out past the mill but willing help and a wheel barrow lessened the labour. The country between Lenwade and Lyng was the most beautiful of the whole trip, and we reached by evening an ideal camping spot in private ground by Lyng mill. We went to two village inns to listen to Norfolk talk and found them to be "kitchen inns" - that is having no bar at all. We had camped very near the fall and the noise of the water was like a gale of wind all night. I was warned against rats and bats in my tent but was only disturbed by nettle

stings. Lyng is fascinating - the mill pool has a superstition, that when foam comes down it means there will be death to someone in the village abutting the opposite bank; the shape of the foam indicates whether the person is a man, woman or child. We had a fairly easy pull out and easy towing to Elsing Mill. Here we pulled out again and had a painful trip to Swanton Morley, towing through banks of high nettles. We camped again at the "fall" of the demolished mill; again there was water rushing down all night and this with the sound of the wind in the trees of a nearby copse was quite eerie. On the next morning after much calculation, we hauled *Bittern* up a ten foot bank, through the copse and into the river. It was a great achievement but a heavier task than we should have attempted alone. We went along, towing nearly all the way and the nettles were terrible again. The country was pretty but flattish, the weather gloriously warm and the wind had dropped. We bathed and shopped at Billingford, a tiny, pretty village, which seemed fast asleep in the sunshine. We camped in sight of Watt's Naval training School and much enjoyed visiting it the next day.

Having learned to respect the nettles I did my share of the towing to North Elmham Mill with bandages worn under two pairs of stockings. Beyond this mill which was very busy we were soon reminded of a warning about weeds stopping us, for we got to the mill boom and found a years accumulation blocking the way. They were nearly as solid as soil and the smell was terrible when we carved a way through with a paddle.

We had a pretty trip - many shallows and much weed, but nothing bad till we came to wire netting across the river. This was so weighted down by weed that we were able to force *Bittern* over it and then had a glorious view of Bintree Mill and a large rock garden ablaze with colour. The miller told us we were the first people up there in a boat for years, but he had helped many over long ago. I was so tired I rested in the house, whilst S. and willing helpers pulled the punt over. From here to Ryburgh was terribly difficult; the weeds were very thick and the banks were full of nettles or cows. I found towing most unpleasant and we were both very hot and tired. We got through a most difficult broken down bridge and soon after arrived at Great Ryburgh mill. It was blowing hard and very cold and we soon had a hot meal and turned in.

The next day we laxed, after having moved the punt into the upper stream. At the inn we listened to the talk and played darts (this inn has three glorious settles, all very old). It was a very cold night and the noise of the wind and falling water scared me stiff. The last lap to Fakenham was on a lovely but very windy day. The towing was easy for long stretches. The country was pretty but not hilly. I hurriedly gave up towing to S. when I was near about forty young bulls; they were so curious about us that they followed S. along the bank to the fence, where they crowded over each other to get a good, last look at us. Then we came to a difficult snag across the river, a boom sticking just above the water with wire netting from this to the river bed and across it. All heavy gear had to be taken out and put in again when we had cleared the obstruction. We had five of these within a short distance and were terribly tired. When we reached Fakenham, we had to go under such a low footbridge that it scraped the coaming of the punt. We camped in a field belonging to the garage which had undertaken to remove *Bittern* to Saxthorpe on the upper Bure. So many people had told us we wouldn't make it to Fakenham that we could hardly believe we were there - nine days out from Norwich. Next morning there was great difficulty getting *Bittern* on board the lorry which was only twelve feet long on the floor - she was lashed with her bow cocked up over the driving cab and so away through driving mist and rain to Saxthorpe for our return journey. We arrived at 11.00 a.m. and found there was little

water in the stream as the mill was not running. I had news from home which necessitated my leaving at once for Wroxham. and S. decided to carry on alone until I was able to rejoin him. He promised to keep a log of his movements and here it is: -

"I waited till the mill was started at 1400 when I was able to push *Bittern* downstream half afloat - about two miles to Itteringham, where I arrived at 1900. In this lap, I waded almost all the way as the water would not float me on board and in some places I had to place rollers on the river bottom to float *Bittern*. I actually passed eleven barbed wire fences across the river, went under three fallen trees and two shallow footbridges, which were a very close fit. The boat jammed badly between one of the trees and the hard bed of the river, and it was only by carving the bark of the tree that I at last got her through. The miller and his sons helped me at Itteringham, and we moved her that evening. Next morning I was away early with the river keeper in company. His help in wading boots was invaluable, as my feet were sore after yesterday's work, and we made Blickling mill in the early afternoon, after a short but very pleasant 'nap' in Blickling Woods - the most perfect spot I have met in the whole trip.

My next halt was at Ingworth, and rain delayed progress for two days. I eased the punt down through the disused mill sluice on a rope, an anxious job but she went through splendidly. I soon got to Aylsham and on the miller's advice took the canal in preference to the main river, and found it good and deep with a helpful current; it was however terribly narrowed by reeds and in places it was all I could do to force through them. Suddenly I came upon the lock, concealed by undergrowth and far out in the country with no habitation in sight. The upper gates had almost disappeared in decay but the lower ones were more robust - the stream was running through a hole in one of them, which was not quite large enough for *Bittern* to scrape through. The banks were high and the land very rough for pulling her out and round, in fact I felt defeated. After some deliberation, I decided to try and open the gate. With the mainsheet and bow ropes, I rigged a single whip on the gate itself from a fallen tree and put the jigger on this. I could only just muster enough rope but it did the trick - the gate was partly silted up and took some moving, but at last I got it open wide enough and slipped through, arriving next at Burgh."

Here I joined S. with his great friend Fred, and we found our progress and portage much easier than when we were alone. There was a great difference in travelling downstream and in glorious sunshine, we towed easily to Oxnead mill, where we pulled out quite simply and paddled to Buxton mill. The river was still shallow and weedy and both banks were swampy, so we camped near Horstead. We were now on the fringe of civilisation, and the inn at Horstead did not seem so villagey as those higher up. We bought a lovely old beer mug and played darts.

At Horstead Mill we learned that there had been such trouble from people in boats that there was talk of opening up all the locks; if so it was feared that the upper reaches would be ruined by the rowdy element of the visitors. At last after many days of enforced idleness the sails could be used again. We stopped at Coltishall to look at the new weed cutter alongside the village inn, and then sailed to Wroxham ending our cruise at the bottom of our garden. Two bolts have been torn out of *Bittern's* bow; the bottom was badly scraped but otherwise, she stood the trip splendidly." This wasn't quite the end of *Bittern's* adventures that year. Before Lt. Cdr. Brooke's leave ran out, the couple sailed *Bittern* to Acle and up the Muck Fleet to Filby Broad.

Harold Morris, the club's founding commodore, had been ill since 1931 and died in 1935. The family fleet was sold and Stewart began to race at Itchenor. His uncle, Eric Morris who had owned *Trout* and the Brown boat *Spoonbill* also began to sailing on the South Coast. *Spoonbill* was taken to Chichester harbour, where she fitted with a bermudan rig for Allcomers racing.

The club bought a Harland and Wolff lifeboat, which was converted to a houseboat by Cox Bros at Barton Turf and contained lockers and facilities for landing from the very low freeboard of a Norfolk Punt. During the 1936 season, the houseboat remained at Ant Mouth until mid June when she was towed back to Barton for the remainder of the season bar Wroxham Week.

Charles Carrodus again:

"Today a fresh northeasterly wind on these open waters but full sail is set. The course for the first race is from Ant Mouth to Thurne Mouth, and the commodore's launch is seen about one o'clock running down the river to fix the buoy at the turning point. Six punts turn up for the open meeting, a good number for so early in the season near this rather bleak coast. Among them is Mr. & Mrs. Peter Cator's new boat, *Gamecock*. Unfortunately the rigging requires some adjustment and to the great disappointment of all present they are unable to sail. With her varnished mahogany hull, cream decks, Bermuda mast and sail and hollow spars, she is a fine looking punt and gives every indication of speed. We shall look forward to her maiden race.

With Mrs. Wilson, the wife of the commodore, officiating at the stop watch and time sheets, a good start is made for the first race at 2.46, all getting away well. In fact in the case of *Blue Dar*, sailed by her new owners, Mr. H. and Miss Cicely Bolingbroke, a little too well as she is over the line and is recalled. However she comes about smartly, restarts and is soon in the running. The outward journey involves close hauling all the way with a little tacking. *Sardine* and *Rushlight* are well in front, and making a race of it when a crack is heard, and *Sardine's* mast is seen to go overboard, which of course finishes the race as far as she is concerned. Capt. C.B.Wilson was sailing with Mr. G.Sambrooke Sturgess as crew, and making the best of a bad job, hauling their sail out of the water and making ready for a tow back to the houseboat, they are passed by the other boats. Apparently the smash occurred through a diamond giving way and Captain Wilson's launch is soon on the spot to tow her home.



Caister Maid was owned by A.T.Chittock. ***Swallow I*** is alongside and Gerald Sambrooke Sturgess is standing on the side deck.

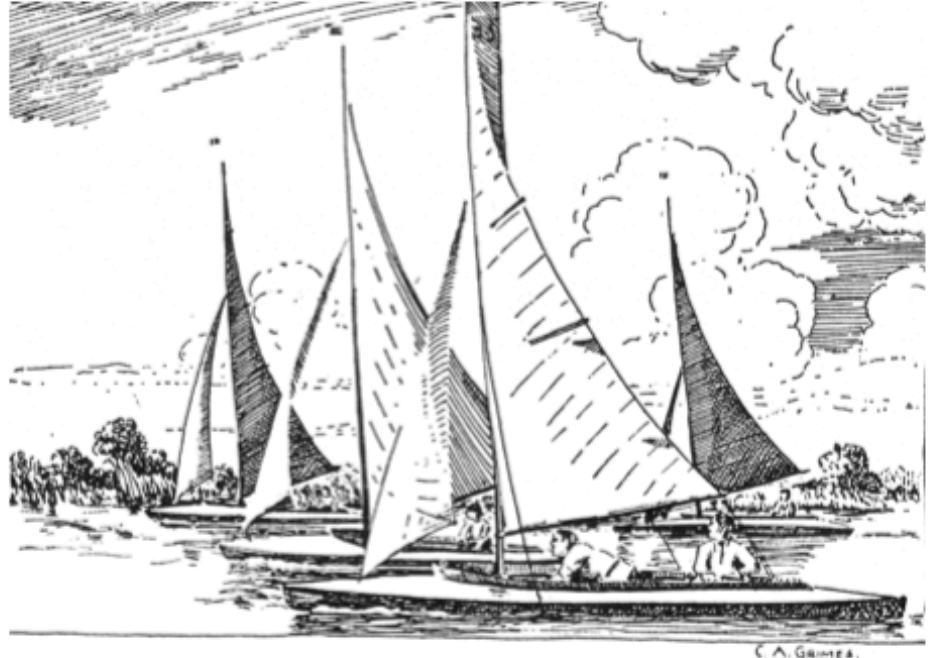
photo: Judy Macdonald
(nee Sturgess) and Peter
Sturgess

Dr. Tracey, the new owner of *Rushlight* wins the race easily saving his handicap on *Stannicle* by 1 min. 4 secs. for the four and a half miles. *Stannicle*, sailed by the secretary, Mr. Eric Chamberlin and *Blue Dar* have a most exciting race, passing and repassing each other five or six times, *Blue Dar* eventually overhauling *Stannicle* almost on the line, beating the amateur built boat by a foot."

Athene Cup

The sketch shows the start of the 1935 race for the trophy; captured by C.A.Grimes, who built *Snipe*, the original holder of class number 25.

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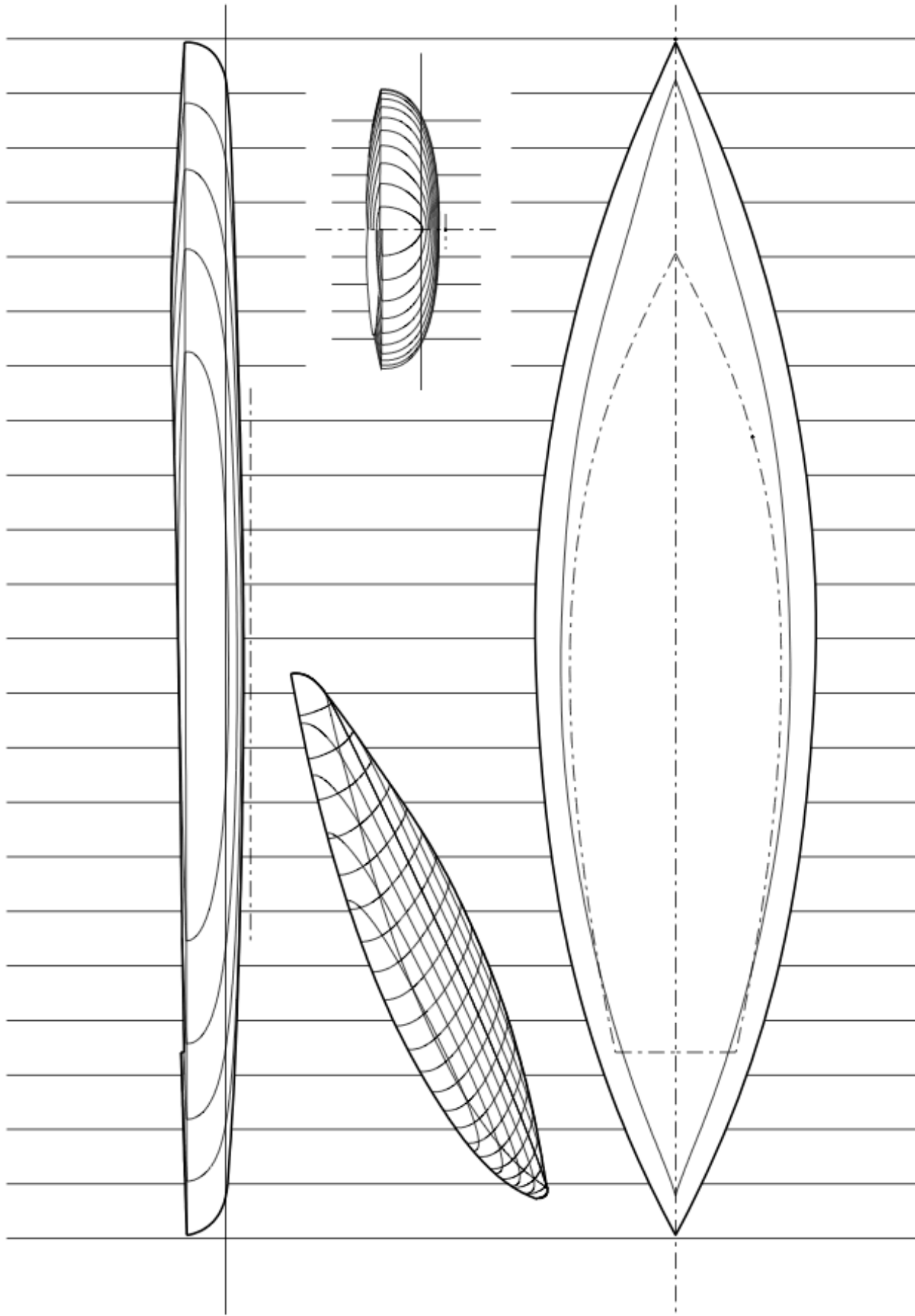
The same year saw the launch of probably the most influential Norfolk Punt ever built. Herbert Woods designed and built *Swallow II* for Gerald Sambrooke Sturgess and his father in law, A.T.Chittock. The pair were to own her until 1960. After their experiences rebuilding the first *Swallow*, *Swallow II* became the first punt to be designed with her centreplate and rudder casing contained in a single, box-section down her centreline to prevent any movement from her designed rocker. She set a parachute spinnaker and was the first Norfolk Punt to fit a kicking strap and a snubbing winch for the jib.

Swallow II

Gerald Sambrooke Sturgess photograph was taken for an article he wrote for *Yachting World* in 1953 and reproduced by John Leather in 'Sail and Oar.'

photo: courtesy Judy Macdonald (nee Sturgess) and Peter Sturgess





Swallow II
Drawn by Andrew Wolstenholme for J.M.Evans from measurements taken by Paul Bown and reproduced with their kind permission

right
Rosybill.

far right
Swallow II.

photos:
courtesy Mike Evans



The Norfolk Punt logo made its first public appearance as the front cover of the 1936 club handbook. This splendid piece of unattributed graphics may originally have been a woodcut.



far right
A Tracey family card from 1936.

right
A start at Barton during the same season.

photos:
courtesy Peter Tracey



On the Right Tack.
Rushlight, July 1936.

The 1936 Olympics provided the young club with its first real international successes. The single handed dinghy selected for the 1936 games, sailed at Kiel in August of that year, was the specially designed Olympic Monotype. Stewart Morris had trouble getting on with the boat but attended as reserve to Peter Scott. This was the last occasion when two entries per country were permitted - the German number two was detailed to ram his colleague's rivals; despite his own inevitable disqualification. The ploy failed and The Netherlands scraped Gold from Germany with Scott in the Bronze position for Great Britain.

Chris Boardman, owner of *Shrimp* and a Norfolk Punt Club member since 1929, provided the greatest cause for celebration. Together with Capt. Russell Harmer (father of Tom) he took the Gold medal in the Six Metre class, sailing K51 *Lalage*.

The oak tree presented to gold medal winners at these Olympics was planted at the family home at How Hill with due ceremony. It's known as the 'Hitler Oak' and can still be seen in the garden, although an explanatory notice has been removed in an assertion of political correctness over history.



Chris Boardman in *Lalage's* helmsmans cockpit.

photo: Uffa Fox



Lalage.

photo: Uffa Fox

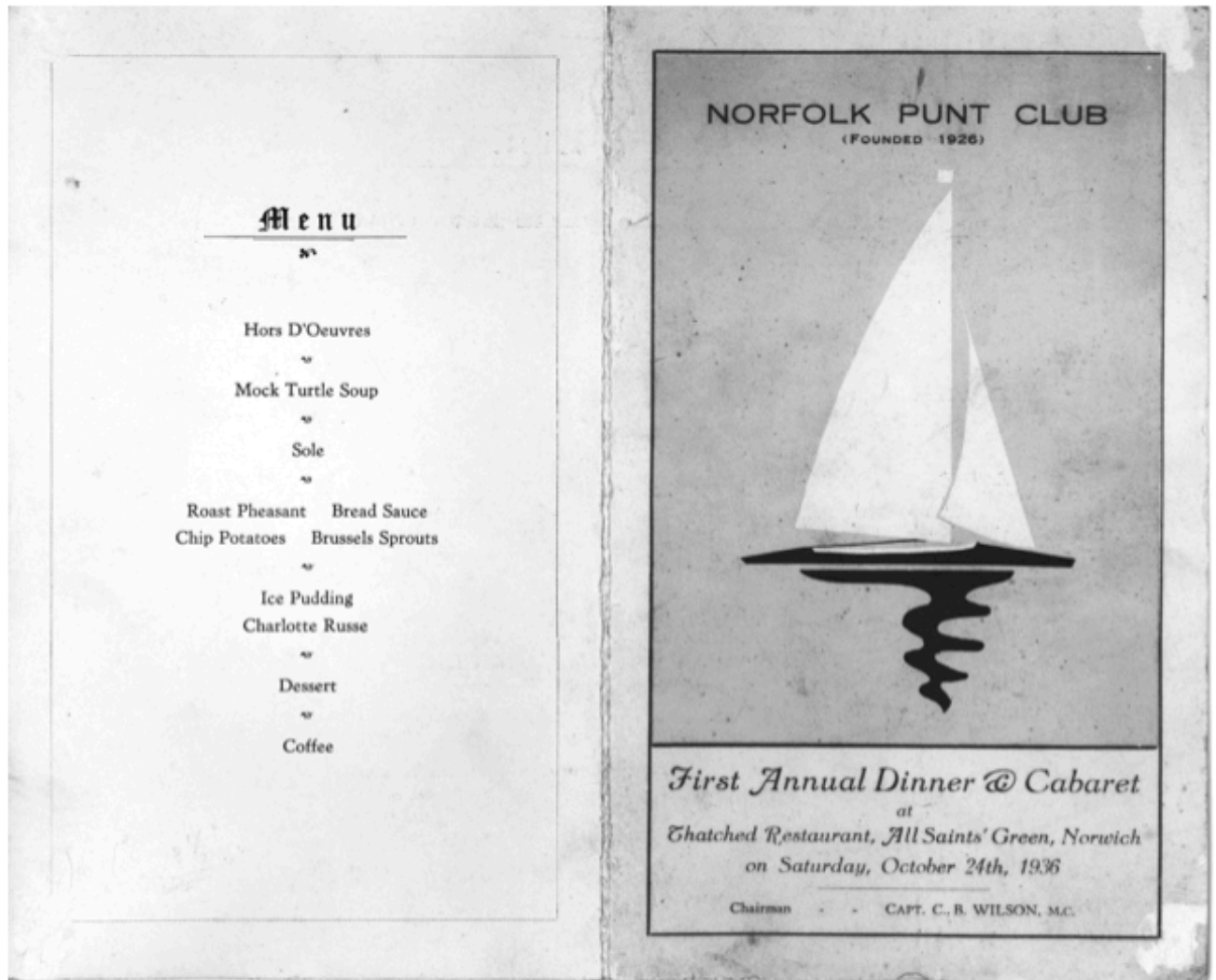


Capt. Russell Harmer's Olympic gold medal.

photographed by courtesy of Tom Harmer



By the end of 1936, the club had largely overcome its internal difficulties and seventeen punts of varying sizes competed in sixty three races, making a total of four hundred and sixty nine starts with an average turnout of seven boats. Membership had risen to eighty six and the first Prize Giving Dinner was held at the Thatched Cottage Restaurant in Norwich. The building had once been used as an elaborate dance hall and Bonds department store (now John Lewis) was built on the site.



above
1936 Annual Dinner
menu by courtesy of Jane
de Quincey.

right
The Thatched
Restaurant.

photo: Authors collection



Toast List.

Cabaret Items by "The Rafters" under the direction of Jack Lamb.

To Propose		To Respond
The Commodore	"THE KING"	Everyone
----- INTERVAL -----		
Capt. Trubshawe	"MARCHING ON" "THE NORFOLK PUNT CLUB"	"The Rafters" The Commodore (Capt. C. B. Wilson, M.C.)
A. T. Chittock, Esq.	A Song Humorous Item "KING OF THE ROAD" "CASTLES IN THE AIR" "THE FLAG OFFICERS"	Basil Platten Miss Pearl Keymer The Rear-Commodore (Dr. B. M. Tracey)
The Vice-Commodore (A. L. Russell, Esq.)	A Song Nothing in particular "THE CLUB SONG" <small>(With apology to "Phil the Fluter")</small> Introducing "THE VISITORS"	Eric Chamberlin, A.V.C.M. Jack Lamb Com. J. H. Montgomery, R.N. R. J. May, Esq.
Character Trio	"TOPPER - BOWLER - CAP"	We Three

Presentation of Prizes by Mrs. C. B. WILSON.

Another Song	By	Basil Platten
Ventriloquial Nonsense and Mimicry	"THE YOUNG FATHER," etc.	Eric Chamberlin, A.V.C.M.
In Lighter Vein	AN IMPRESSION	Miss Pearl Keymer
An Interrupted Duet	Introducing	Jack and Basil
A Final Item	"TAKING OUR LEAVE"	"The Rafters"
	GOD SAVE THE KING	

At the Piano - J. F. Blyth.

Eric Chamberlin worked at Herbert Woods yard at Potter Heigham and served for many years as club secretary. He gave his first rendition of a Norfolk Punt Club song which he had composed to the tune of 'Phil the Fluter' at the dinner:

"Do you know the Norfolk Punt Club that sails on Barton Broad?
A happy lot of sporting folk the angels will reward,
They cluster round the houseboat like seagulls on a rock
But one fine day they'll tip her up and get an awful shock.
First we'll take the commodore, he's handsome and equitable,
He has a lovely *Sardine* that has never seen a tin,
His lady's kind and gracious and exceedingly hospitable,
And the claret cup at Irstead Lodge, it helps you on to win.

So point her up and haul your wind, get ready for the gun
But never set your spinnaker until you're on the run.
Though some may ride and some may shoot, while others like to hunt
The finest sport in all the world is sailing in a punt.

There's Dr. Basil Tracey, he's both capable and keen.
He rushes *Rushlight* round the Broad, her tail is seldom seen.

He likes to chat of this and that and things that interest him,
Until a gentle voice is heard "it's time to come home, Tim."
And Russell racing *Cavender*, his lady crewing dutifully,
Chasing Peter Cator, who says starboard with a yell,
With 'Kytie' on the tiller making *Gamecock* travel beautifully.
Then Jermy starts a luffing match and sells his punt as well.

So point her up and haul your wind, get ready for the gun
But never set your spinnaker until you're on the run.
Though some may ride and some may shoot, while others like to hunt
The finest sport in all the world is sailing in a punt.

There's Gerald Sambrooke Sturgess, he's both elegant and trim,
And complicated handicaps are nothing much to him.
And he can cure your toothache, he's a man of many parts,
And he decorates the housboat with thing-me-bobs and charts,
And Wedderburn and Andrews racing *Pintail* with tenacity,
To catch the brothers Bolingbroke - sailing in *Blue Dar*.
Wedderburn likes swimming and he dives with great audacity
To rescue damsels in distress when overturned they are.

So point her up and haul your wind, get ready for the gun
But never set your spinnaker until you're on the run.
Though some may ride and some may shoot, while others like to hunt
The finest sport in all the world is sailing in a punt.

Now when the racing's over and the wind is falling light,
We take tea on the houseboat where the conversations bright.
Then Mrs Arendt mothers us and rations out the cake,
She superintends the washing up and keeps us all awake.
We've lots more boats and owners, all with fascinating qualities
To chatter of the lot of them would take up too much time,
So thank you very much for putting up with my fribilities.
I really had an awful job to get the words to rhyme.

So point her up and haul your wind, get ready for the gun
But never set your spinnaker until you're on the run.
Though some may ride and some may shoot, while others like to hunt
The finest sport in all the world is sailing in a punt."





Wroxham Week 1937.
1 to r

**Messrs. Wedderburn
and Andrews in *Pintail*,
Peter Cator in
Gamecock, John Curl in
Decoy and Gerald
Sturges sailing
Swallow II.**

photo:
courtesy Mike Evans

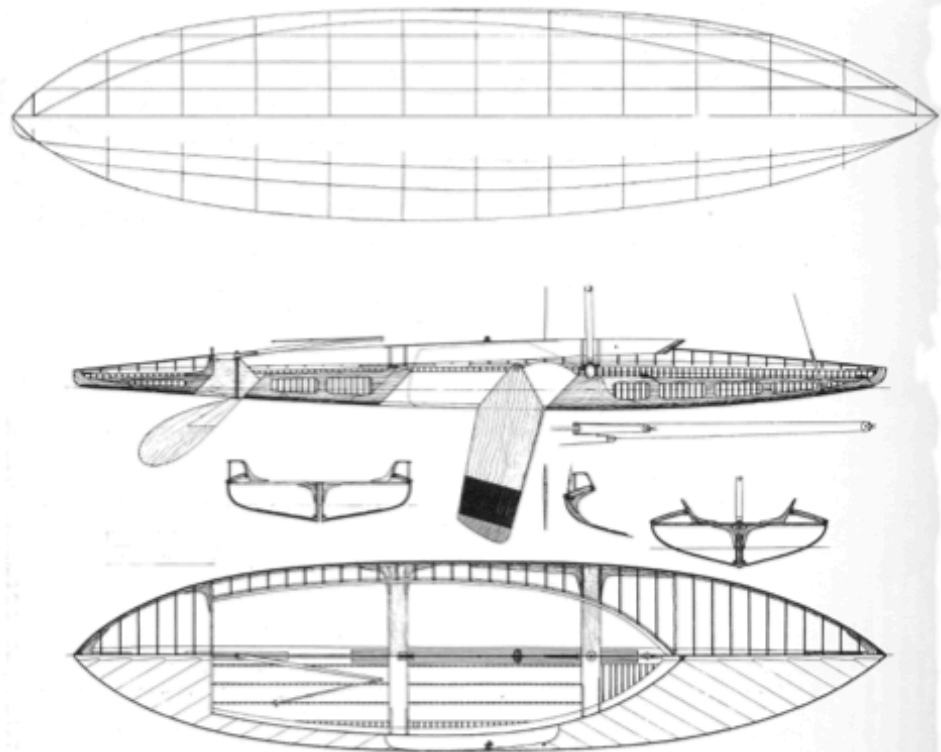
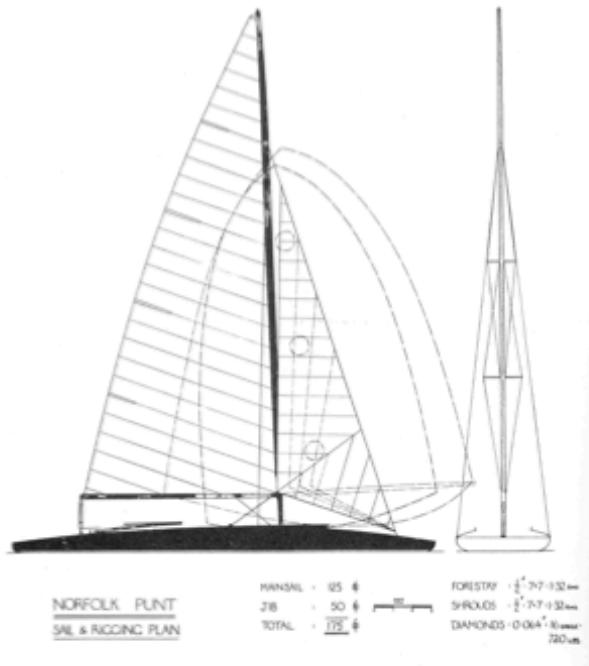
The 1937 AGM discussed a proposal that the Norfolk Punt Club amalgamate with the Great Yarmouth Y.C. (founded in 1883), the Norfolk Dinghy Club (1931), the Horning Town Sailing Club (1910) and the Yare & Bure Sailing Club (1876) to form a new club to be known as the Norfolk Broads Yacht Club. This club intended to take on a lease of Wroxham Broad, which was seen as a considerable opportunity by many sailors for racing on private water with private, shorebased facilities away from a growing number of hire boats. Horning Sailing Club was founded the day Horning Town S.C. members decided to amalgamate into the new club at Wroxham. It is interesting to reflect that many H.T.S.C. members considered Horning Reach too crowded for sensible racing even in those days. The formation of the NBYC marked the beginning of Broads sailing clubs feeling a need for on-shore facilities and the inception of the territorial aspirations that clubs hold today. Probably an unconsidered side effect of the new club was an erosion of existing clubs ability to organise regattas when and where they felt like, virtually anywhere on the river system.

Most local yachtsmen belonged to most local sailing clubs and the debate must have revealed a number of divided loyalties. Despite strong support in some quarters, the Norfolk Punt Club declined the invitation to amalgamate and by fifteen votes to five, elected to remain at Barton. As the Norfolk Broads Yacht Club was formed, the Norfolk Punt Club found itself the third oldest sailing club in the area to the Royal Norfolk & Suffolk Y.C. (1859) and the Beccles Amateur S.C. founded in 1902.

None of the punts built after *Swallow II* had improved on her performance and the class began to feel that the future might best be served by adopting a new Herbert Woods designed, carvel built, one-design hull. The decision was, wisely as it turned out, fudged. Any prospective builder would be free to build to the old rules if they wished and choice of rig and equipment was left to the existing class rules. Woods was given the freedom to design the new hull outside the existing class rules if he felt he could improve on *Swallow II's* performance. The specification and plans were agreed in December 1938 and adopted at a meeting in the Thatched Restaurant.

Uffa Fox produced a series of five yachting books during the 1930s. The sixth in the series was overtaken by the Second World War but John Leather found these immaculate drawings of Herbert Woods' One Design Norfolk Punt amongst Uffa's papers and intended for inclusion in the still-born, sixth volume.

John maintains the drawings are unlikely to be by either Uffa or Herbert Woods. He included them in his own work 'Sail and Oar'.



Herbert Woods produced three boats to his new design. *Kipper* was built for W.G.Jones and Frank Beaching. *Bloater* (now *Curlew*) for Eric Chamberlin and *Limelight* he kept for himself.



Limelight.

photo: Jennifer Woods

The class had come to expect every new Herbert Woods punt to be faster than the last and *Limelight's* first outing was keenly awaited. She was towed from Potter Heigham to Hickling for her debut in the 1939 race for the Wortley Bowl. Gerald Sambrooke Sturgess recalled, with more than a hint of self satisfaction:

"He was accompanied to the regatta by his wife and a party of young friends, who, one suspects had come to witness yet another triumph for Herbert. Sadly for them, *Swallow II* beat *Limelight* by nearly two minutes and *Widgeon* beat her by over half a minute. As soon as Herbert finished, he stowed her and went straight back to Potter Heigham. It seems doubtful that any champagne corks popped there! *Swallow II* had a successful day with a hat-trick, which must have been even more galling, in thus emulating Herbert's own earlier performances."



**The Wortley Cup
Hickling Broad 1939.**

**l to r
Widgeon (W.F.Jermy)
Limelight (Herbert
Woods) and *Swallow II*
(A.T.Chittock).**

photo:
courtesy Mike Evans

Swallow II at Wroxham in 1939 - from a montage on the menu for the Norfolk Broads Yacht Club's Annual dinner.



International political pressure increased and the 1939 Broads regatta season progressed uneasily beside the Danzig crisis. Contemporary reports are overwhelmed with an air of unreality and knowledge of the inevitability of another war. The season was nearly done when the Second World War was declared; half way through Lowestoft Sea Week.

Punts were stored as far out of harms way as possible for the duration. Judy Macdonald (nee Sturgess) recalled: "At the outbreak of war *Swallow II* was put up on blocks in Gilbert Chittock's boathouse at the Rookery, Dilham - an afternoon I can remember vividly although I was only three and a half".

