

BROADS DINING TRIP AUGUST 25TH

Forty-two members set off from Wymondham Central Hall at 09.30 and head towards Horning, arriving at 10.15 leaving half an hour to spare before boarding our vessel for the day, Southern Comfort. She is a double-deck paddle boat, purpose built for the Broads with a capacity of one hundred people.



The cruise started at 11.00 as we headed towards Ranworth along the River Bure. This route took us past Cockshoot Nature Reserve that is part of the Bure Marshes National Reserve and managed by Norfolk Wildlife Trust.



As we cruised along the river we met The Albion which is a 125yr old traditional Norfolk Wherry. It was actually built at Lowestoft in Suffolk by William Brighton for Bungay Maltsters W.D & A.E. Walker and to be used on the River Waveney.

Known as a "black-sailed trader," she is one of only two remaining commercial Wherries built specifically for the Broads, from over three hundred of these craft at their peak.

To head towards Ranworth Broad, we turned into Ranworth Dyke. As Ranworth Broad does not allow access being a wildlife haven, we turned around in what is actually Malthouse Broad. Here we saw a Great Crested Grebe with two offspring hitching a ride on her back, and several other bird species.

While we had our planned lunch we headed back up Ranworth Dyke and then on the River Bure again, upstream towards South Walsham Broad, via Fleet Dyke. Along this route we passed St. Benet's Abbey. The Abbey lies close to the meeting place of the rivers Bure and Ant. This was the only Norfolk monastery founded in the Anglo-Saxon period which continued in use throughout the Middle Ages. It is the only monastery in England which was not closed down by Henry VIII, and the Bishop of Norwich is still the Abbot.

We returned to the River Bure and headed back to Horning to complete our three-hour cruise. On the way back we passed The Albion again, many water birds, including Egrets and Herons, and a brief glimpse of a Marsh Harrier against the skyline.



Another excellent August lunch trip on the broads and with a Heron to greet us on our return to Horning.

I am told that this was the tenth consecutive year that Wymondham u3a has been on a Broads Cruise, and the tenth consecutive year that there has been good weather for it. As a relatively new member it was my third consecutive Broads trip. Since I joined Wymondham u3a I have been on visits and coach holidays with generally good weather, with one major exception at Beth Catto's Garden when it was "extremely damp". What was different about this visit? It was the only one that I was on that Vivienne Dollimore did not attend. She seems to have a way with the weather.

However, as we all set off on September holiday to Northern Ireland I think her weather skills will be more severely tested: it is a green and pleasant land for a reason!!!!!!!!!!!!

ghdj