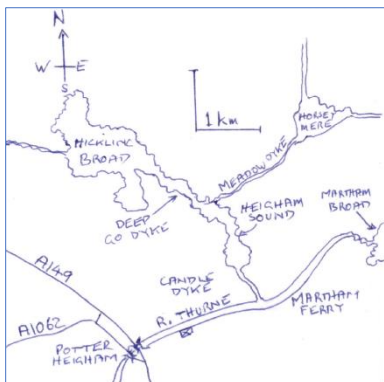


### Blue Bottle A-Broad and Awash!

After a trip to Norfolk in 2021 Susan and I returned Broad-side in 2022 with our Lymington River Scow, Blue Bottle. Missing the summer heat wave, September offered the seasons and weather on the change. We were based on the banks of the River Thurne between Potter Heigham and Martham Boatyard.



The day of our adventure: mildly breezy, but nothing to worry Captain Haddock; we considered reefing, but I thought we would be ok with full sail.



We shot up the River Thurne turning into Candle Dyke and Heigham Sound, heading for Hickling Broad. It was a tough set of short tacks in Candle Dyke so to make the tacking more efficient I jammed the mainsheet with a simple slip knot. This worked for 20 or more tacks. We had by then agreed that a reef would be good and had sighted a mooring Staithe, later identified as Deep Go Dyke, to set the reef. On the very next tack, a gust of a wind plus wind shift, and my inability to let go the mainsheet quickly, put the port gunwale seriously under, water.

We avoided a capsize, but only just, and were standing knee deep in water; gunwales two or three inches above water but the open slot of the centreboard one or two inches under water. Oh, and Susan

was vocalising a stream of most unbecoming expletives! Vigorous bailing ensued.

Shortly, I saw the centreboard slot was above the water line and advised Susan that we were safe, we were not going to sink. Up to that moment sinking had been a strong possibility, with the resulting 'Peyton-esk' picture of the boat perfectly upright, just the peak of the sail showing.



While Susan bailed, I was able to manoeuvre us to the Deep Go Dyke staithe. All the while the expletives continued.

At the first chance, Susan leapt ashore, leaving me to bail and put in the reef.

Seamanship-like decorum restored in the boat, and with a calmer Susan, we set off but with Susan at the helm.

Abandoning Hickling Broad we chose instead Meadow Dyke and Horsey Mere. Passage through Meadow Dyke was an easy reach and on Horsey Mere a screaming reach. A cup of tea at Horsey Mill would be good, with an easy sail up to the cafe, but the thought of beating out dissuaded us. We screamed back across Horsey Mere out through Meadow Dyke, bound for home.

An invigorating sail! Unfortunate that we got our feet wet, lucky we did not capsize but encouraging that even in the extreme circumstances to which we pushed 'Blue Bottle' she bobbed up and even when half full of water could be sailed to safety. Susan learned to sail on Hickling Broad, so the moral is, when on the Broads if Susan says we need a reef, We Need a Reef!

David Linsell

LR 508 Blue