



the gaff line

special edition

For the Friends of the Wherry Yacht Charter Charitable Trust

We are delighted to have been contacted by Diana Wilson about a diary, written by her Great Aunt Di, detailing and picturing her holiday aboard the wherry yacht 'Spree' in 1911.

In the main newsletter we have published extracts from this diary but here, online, we have the space to let you enjoy them in full. Diana writes:



This is the boat

“ In 1911 Alec Scoones, 35, spent a fortnight holiday on the wherry 'Spree' with his cousin Mildred. A chaperone was needed, so his sister Di, 45, went too. The diary is hers, written in indelible pencil in a black note book with her self developed photos and some postcards.

Alec attended the Merchant Naval School from 13 and at 15 he went to sea as a cadet and served six years. In 1900 he trained as a civil engineer. In 1911 he was on leave from building railways in Brazil. The romance with Mildred was short lived.

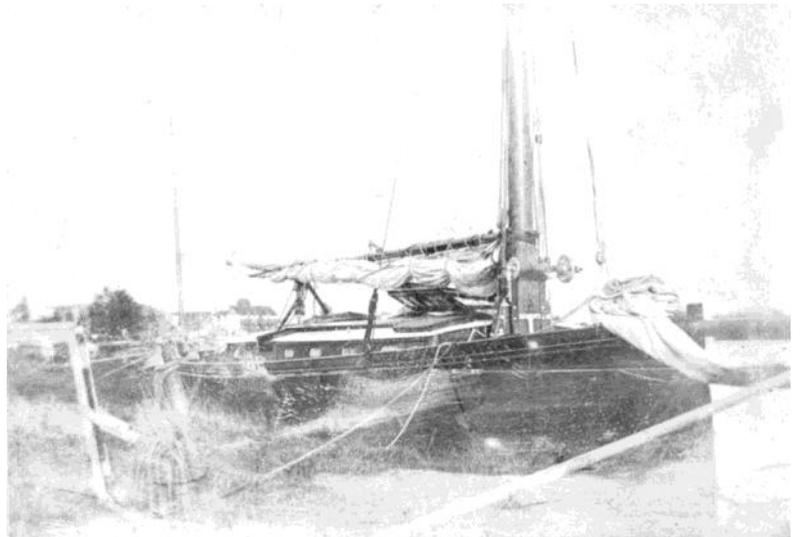
Di never married. She was typical of her class and time. Their father, a rector, died in 1891 leaving Di £3000 which brought some income but not independence, so she kept house for an academic brother. In 1894 she travelled to Monte Video to visit a brother working there and in 1899 made a trip with him to Japan. However she was pleased to holiday on the Broads with her youngest brother Alec. “

July 1st

Left from Liverpool St. at 10am with Alec and Mildred and reached Wroxham, very late, at 2.15. Lunch at King's Head Hotel. Accepting the hints of a man at our table who claimed 25 years acquaintance with the Broads we bought yards of mosuuito muslin. (It remained unused). We repaired to Messrs Loynes wharf.

Found The Spree moored alongside and ready for our occupation - the luggage having been put on board. While Alec went off to Roy's stores to get in eatables etc. we proceeded to unpack. Mildred took the single cabin into which with great dexterity she was able to curl herself. I had the double cabin and proceeded to make good use of every nail and string available. The saloon contained a centre table with flaps - 4 bunks round, 2 long seats and a very short piano, a good hanging lamp and several lockers.

Pictured, from top right: photographs of the wherry Spree, moored



...continued

Up went the sail about 6pm and we slowly sailed down the Bure. On the right pretty bungalows and gardens - good thatched roofs with wavy patterns cut along the ridge tops. About 7 o'clock we anchored on the bank opposite the mouth of Wroxham Broad where we got a view of the sunset. After dinner in the saloon were soon out in the dinghy exploring the Broad. Lots of water lilies and picturesque banks of reeds, a boat or two and some tuneful thrushes. By 9pm we were on board preparing for bed.

Sunday July 2nd.

George the skipper and Tom the youth were astir soon after 7 and by 10am we were sailing round the Broad with a nice fresh breeze. Alec at the helm - the mop going overboard and we had about 3 turns to get it back. We soon left and went further down the river, past Horning to Ranworth Dike up which we went a small way and anchored. In the evening had a long paddle in the dinghy among the reeds and water fowl - shrouded in white mist.

(We find on board there is so much to do there is no time to do anything and by the time work, books writing case, glasses, cameras, drinks, chocolates have been collected, cushions shawls etc. arranged, it is time to go to lunch - a siesta follows and then it is time for tea. The flat meadows with a great scarcity of flowers present a strangely uninterrupted vista of green - the landscape varied by many windmills, white sails in all directions - herds of many cattle and horses grazing in the pastures.)

Monday July 3rd

We got onto the main river and turned up the Ant. Alec's first attempt at quanting resulting in his nearly taking an unpremeditated header and all hands having to rescue the pole as the boat caught her. We sped from side to side till Ludham Bridge was reached and there we tied up by the old red brick windmill in gorgeous sunshine. While Alec went to the village pub Mildred and I wandered down a delightful country road and culled the blossoms from the hedges. Photographed horses. We rendez-voued for lunch, after which Alec and Mildred boarded the dinghy and with sail up left for Barton Broad in a nice breeze. I slumbered peacefully while George searched the country for green peas and fruit. The others returned as the wind dropped.

After dinner we strolled along the road and enjoyed the larks and thrushes. They never seem to go to bed in this part of the world. They sing me to sleep and are at it when I wake. Hay making was in full swing. We returned and made music till time to turn in.

Pictured, from top right: photograph of the bankside, postcard of the Bure, postcard of Horning Mill photograph of George the skipper and (bottom right) photograph of the Ant towards Stalham

