



# 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.. We continue our serialisation in this second instalment, rejoining the group at Ludham Bridge...

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## **Tuesday 4th July**

(Ludham Bridge.) Great hue and cry raised for the small camera but diligent searches over the vast recesses of The Spree revealed it not. It must have been left ashore by Alec and Mildred yesterday. Overcome by the blow Alec set sail in the dinghy. We eventually got off in the yacht shortly after and came up with him in the main river on the way to Yarmouth. A fair wind took us down easily and we lay to about 4 o'clock.

Getting into towny clothes we landed and having had tea proceeded to shop, the camera having to be replaced - and some duets. Of Yarmouth itself we saw not much save one or two of the famous rows. We chartered a cab to come for us after dinner and went to the Britannia Pier where for an hour or so we listened to a very good band and were much entertained by the dancers on the pier head - a weird two step which was danced with great solemnity. A glorious sunset and a fine beach.

## **Wednesday July 5th**

Alec sped away at an early hour to Marlow. We made off about 10.30 and soon entered Breydon Water. No light for the camera, otherwise I would have recorded six wherries that slowly set sail in front of us making a fine effect with their black sails. We went up the Yare but made small progress as the wind soon died down. By about 4pm we were only at Reedham. Very flat green meadows on either bank unrelieved by cattle or trees.

By 7 o'clock or so we reached Cantley by aid of quanting. Tethered there for the night near a jolly hayfield 'sweet as violets' as the old hay makers remarked. After our repast walked up the road to find the post office. George meanwhile set up the fishing rods so we sat and fished and caught nothing till the dew sent us in to the piano.



**Pictured, from top right:** photograph of a sailing boat making headway, photograph of hay makers

## Thursday July 6th

Awoke to a grilling morning. George said the wind was fair and that we ought to make Whitlingham so a wire to Alec was dispatched. We got off soon after 9am. The sun being scorching hot we tootled on the piano and frizzled in the sun on the deck. I took to the saloon and Mildred lay in solitary state on deck and fell prey to some photographers. We felt such small midgets as sole passengers on such a big boat.

Coldham passed and Brundel. We arrived at Surlingham Ferry for lunch. That over we sat in a pleasant field in shade and breeze. Mildred diverted herself with the chickens and I with the camera. A charming ferry house with nice green landing place.

With many tacks and by use of the pole we reached Whitlingham. As we moored George espied Alec coming down the bank. A large feast of sorts was going on in a jolly thatched barn in some of the Colman grounds - a belated coronation tea perhaps. A band played lugubrious tunes afterwards during games and sports.

After dinner, went up the river in the dinghy amid many craft occupied by 'early closers' of Norwich - some of whom were practising in fours for regattas.

## Friday July 7th.

'otter and 'otter - but to see Norwich cathedral is a necessity, so about 10.30 we got into the dinghy rowed by George and went up Thorpe Reach - well worth doing so charming are the gardens and a fine row of yellow calceolarias on the left and roses in profusion on the right. We landed and via a tram not far up the road reached the town and spent an hour in the cathedral and cloisters.

Lunch at the Royal Hotel after purchase of postcards - a pleasant laze in the cool hall completed the afternoon. Alec and Mildred went out to explore the shops and returned with a charming blue bonnet which was immediately taken into use. We returned by train to Whitlingham and lay to for the night at Bramerton Woods End, a peaceful spot with a pretty wooded hill and country road alongside the river.

## Saturday July 8th.

A fair wind and glorious morning favoured our departure and we had a beautiful sail. Alec sailed his craft and I tried shots with the camera. We reached Oulton about 4pm. Fortified by tea, drove into Lowestoft in the large governess sort of cart, much to be preferred to the ordinary cab. We attended an organ recital in St. John's and then had a tram ride, landing up at the Empire Hotel for dinner. which was quite well done - a good hotel orchestra. An entertainment in the Olympian Gardens proved a failure so we drove back to the boat and made our own music.

**Pictured, from top right:** photograph of the the wherry under sail, photograph of the font in Norwich cathedral, photograph of Norwich cathedral spire, postcard of Oulton

