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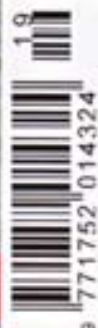


**OPEN UP
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**YOU OUGHT
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AND FLYTE**

SAIL A CLASSIC CRAFT NOW - FREE WHEN YOU SUBSCRIBE!





PICNIC TIME: Anchor your Orkney or ground it.

After a day, we're ready to settle down with Doris

Andrew Pinder casts off with his family in the Orkney 522, a serious little boat you can beach, take to sea, perhaps even camp aboard. Ted, 9, steered most of the way and Robbie, 12, took the best pictures

Orkneys have been popular small workboats with fishermen, harbour authorities, sailing clubs and the like for years, establishing a strong reputation for quality, durability and seaworthiness. It is precisely these qualities that also give them appeal to families looking for

a safe, fun way to get afloat. And in a time of recession, the very reasonable price tag is another attractive feature.

To put theory to the test, I headed for the picturesque River Deben in Suffolk, accompanied by wife Rachel and sons Robbie (aged 12) and Ted (aged 9). We were to be lent an Orkney 522 for the weekend by Andrew Nunn, Director of

Seamark Nunn of Felixstowe, one of the longest established boating businesses in the UK.

In handing over the boat to us, there was very little that Andrew needed to explain – except perhaps her name. “As she is a day boat we decided to christen her Doris”, he said with a grin. So filled with the spirit of ‘Anything you can do I can do better’ the



ABOVE: Rachel with Ted in the cuddy – and now you can exit through a windscreen hatch (below)

family climbed aboard and we headed off down river.

The renowned features of these boats were immediately apparent: she simply 'felt right'. It was not long before I handed over the helm to Ted. Although he is far more used to wind power and a tiller, he soon learnt not to over-compensate with the steering, and settled down behind the wheel like he had been doing it all his life.

At 17ft 1in (5.22m) the Orkney 522 is the middle boat in the Series 2 dayboat range, with plenty of space on board for the average family. The wide, deep, self-draining cockpit that is an ideal platform for fishermen is also a very secure area for simply lazing about and enjoying the sun.

Our boat had grab rails running down either coaming, which are an optional extra, but very convenient when it comes to moving about in any sort of sea.

There are two large waterproof lockers that double as seats for the helmsman and navigator, providing ample stowage space for a day trip. All the controls are arranged tidily and logically in one small console, which in our case included a Garmin multi-function chart plotter and fish-finder (again an optional accessory). Underneath the console there is more generous stowage, although in this case not watertight. Finally there is a forward stowage compartment, and an open well in the bow for anchor, etc.

By now we were nearing an area known

as 'The Rocks' – a popular picnic spot on a small sandy beach underneath a wooded river cliff. Normally we would anchor off and then row ashore in an inflatable dinghy. Today, however, there was no such hassle.

The Orkney 522 has a draft of less than half a metre, which meant we were able to gently nudge right up to the beach (taking care of course to raise the outboard engine – a simple one-touch-of-a-button operation with its built-in power tilt). In only a couple of minutes the picnic was unpacked, and most of us did not even have damp feet (apart from Robbie, of course, who always has to get himself as wet as possible).

Looking back as we munched our sandwiches I could not help noticing that the Orkney 522 has very clean, simple lines that are easy on the eye.

After lunch, the adults wanted to lie back and snooze in the warming sun. But it was not to be. The boys craved speed. We had shown that the Orkney was safe, but was she fun? Robbie was at the helm as we cleared the moorings by Ramsholt Inn and headed for the long clear stretch between the marshes. As he eased the throttle forward, Doris immediately responded, lifting on to a plane. She had a surprising turn of speed!

The design brief behind Orkney's Series 2 boats was to maintain the class's lines and sea-going abilities, but at the same time to improve its performance at speed. This has been achieved by keeping the classic V-shaped bow, but flattening the underwater profile aft to facilitate planing.

So even with a relatively low powered engine (50 H.P. – the maximum specified), speeds of up to 26 knots are possible. Seamark Nunn recommend the Honda 50 outboard, which we found to be clean, quiet and very fuel efficient. (Apparently it even has a PC computer interface for diagnostics and testing.)

Fuel for the engine is stored in two 25 litre removable plastic tanks, easily accessible through a hatch in the cockpit floor. That gives the standard Orkney 522 a cruising range of up to 6 ½ hours (although admittedly you do have to swap the fuel line over manually, half way through). Navigators looking to increase the range further can opt for a third plastic tank in the bows.

Pointing out to Robbie that we were getting tired of his Jeremy Clarkson impersonation, I decided that it was time to put to sea.

I glanced across at Rachel – she who had once famously been sick on a river ferry. Gone was her usual smile, and in its place a ▶



ORKNEY 522

Length 17ft 1in (5.22 m)
Beam 6ft 7in (2.00 m)
Interior freeboard 26in (0.66 m)
Weight 1050lb (475 kg)
Max. engine power 50HP
Max. speed 26 knots

BASIC PRICE

(including Honda BF50 engine and braked trailer)
 £17,999 incl VAT

Additional items as featured (rails, fairleads, navigation lights, cockpit cover, etc.) £1,460
 Garmin chart plotter/ fish-finder £600

For navigation on inland waterways where strict speed limits apply, a 20HP engine could be specified as an alternative, for a reduced cost of about £2,000

All prices inclusive of VAT

The other boats in the Series 2 range are the smaller Orkney 452 (14ft 10in), which is light enough for an un-braked trailer, and comes with a Suzuki 25 HP engine for £12,150 and the larger Orkney 592 (19ft 5in) which is £23,195 with braked trailer and Honda 75HP engine.

ABOVE: Ted takes the wheel

look of apprehension. The River Deben has probably the strongest estuarial tide on the East Coast, and the full force of the flood was now against us.

As usual the water was circulating and confused. Nevertheless, we had little difficulty in making Woodbridge Haven buoy, which is the outermost channel marker. There was a fair wind, the weather had turned a bit colder and the sea was a typical East Coast grey. The family moved forward into the warmth and shelter of the cuddy (which covers about a third of the Orkney 522's length overall). Rachel was starting to smile again – that was a good sign.

Although by no means being tested to the extreme, I got the distinct impression that the Orkney 522 could handle herself in rough weather. I would not want to undertake a cross-channel passage in her, or deliberately go looking for trouble, but I felt that should we be 'caught out' I could be confident that she would bring us safely through. We were not exactly 'On Moonlight Bay' as we headed for home, but Doris was certainly no 'Calamity Jane'.

I hope by now I have conveyed a sense of the versatility of this craft. That versatility continues in the ease with which she can be handled ashore. A purpose-designed, braked, road trailer (built by Rapide) is included in the purchase price. By limiting the engine size to 50 HP, the Orkney designers have been able to keep the overall weight of the craft down to a manageable 1050 lb (475 kg). She can be

towed behind an average family car, and, given a reasonable ramp, can be launched and recovered by one, or at most two, adults.

Ted was adopting the position of forward look-out as we approached the mooring at Waldringfield. He had discovered one more clever design feature of the Orkney 522. The forward window hatch opens right up (on a gas strut – no chance of it coming down by accident), and the seat beneath it hinges out of the way, so it is possible to stand securely, fully upright in the opening, without having to stoop or balance precariously.

"That's the sort of thing I like about this as a family boat", said Rachel, "it feels very secure... And it would be good for shopping trips too." Robbie's comment was predictable: "I like that it can go really fast."

My eyes had certainly been opened to new possibilities.

This wasn't just a harbour runabout, it was a highly viable fun boat, for a price more akin to a car than to a house! We moored up and prepared to set off for the delights of the Maybush Inn. Ted sat watching as I rigged the PVC cover over the cockpit. I looked at him. He looked back. I knew what he was thinking.

We sometimes go off on camping trips in the family's Wayfarer dinghy. Would it be possible to camp on here? It would take a bit of reorganization, but maybe ...

■ **Information: Seamark Nunn on 01394 451000 or www.seamarknunn.com**



ABOVE: A Yeoman race start at Norfolk Broads YC

Salute the Yeoman: it's 40 this year



Andrew Musgrave bought one. Then another, and another – truly “a husband and wife team with my crew Daphne.” Here Andrew profiles the Yeoman ahead of May 23-25, the class’s 40th anniversary regatta and celebration event

Our entry list of helms for the Yeoman national championships will range from teenagers to those in their late 70’s - not a bad age range?

Certainly the first builder, Leslie Landermore, would be proud of yet another success.

The first Yeoman sailing boat, a 20 foot

half-decker was built of wood in 1969 and formed the basis of moulds for all subsequent boats built of GRP, and now numbering over 200. The idea of the Yeoman is attributed to Mr Ernest Yeomans, a friend of Leslie Landamore who persuaded him to design and build a 20ft Bermudan rigged boat with a smaller sail area and lower maintenance costs than the traditional Yare and Bure One Design.

Leslie wanted all the boats to be named after semi-precious stones such as Zircon, Topaz, Amethyst and Cameo, but this plan foundered early on, as did the numbering sequence as he gave in to requests for ‘special’ numbers. Landamores built all the boats, including some supplied as kits up to November 1977, when the licence passed to Moores as Landamore concentrated on bigger boats. Records show that boats were



ABOVE: Yeomen at Wroxham

delivered to London, The South Coast including the Isle of Wight, Scotland, Devon and Northern Ireland. More recently boats have been traced to Hong Kong and Dubai where the owners have been pleased to make contact with the National Association.

The earliest boats were rather basic as befitted the 'general purpose' nature of their design, but they were raced in the early 1970's in the Allcomers series, and subsequently at Queen Mary Reservoir, Rutland Water, The Exe Estuary in Devon, and various Scottish Lochs. Early racers in the Wroxham fleet included Dick Hendry (Yeoman No 2), Jim Campbell (No 6), Alan Eades (No 14) and Chris Mahoney (No 17).

It was at this time that racing modifications began to appear starting with gear and hull strengthening, and it is thought that Jamie Campbell was the first to experiment with a spinnaker reputed to have come from a Dragon in the mid 1970's. The next generation of racers saw Hugh Batchelor virtually unbeatable in No 43, and later Mike Evans was the man to beat in Yeoman 124, before changing allegiance to the Yare and Bure OD.

In recent years various members of the Harston family have found considerable success, as have the Browns who travelled weekly from Essex for some years to sail at Wroxham. Current National champion is Sally Dugdale who has proved virtually

unbeatable in the last two years, and will defend her title again this year.

The 'Kinsman' lifting keel version of the Yeoman was never considered to be quite so competitive, especially on the Broads, with extra weight and different keel and rudder shape, but they are raced with considerable success on more open areas such as Rutland Water, and approximately 50 boats have been constructed.

Being developed in inflationary times, the initial £1000 price of the Yeoman, rose dramatically to £2500 by 1978 and £5000 by 1984, but the boat is not a 'One Design' and has been steadily developed and improved over the years. The first modifications involved the introduction of the larger Genoa, to the extent that it is now larger than the mainsail, and this in turn made jib-furling desirable, and today most racing sails are now 'high aspect'.

Some modifications have been universally welcomed, such as the provision of built in buoyancy chambers (the early boats had none!) and the conversion of side deck mounted winches to a single centre cockpit winch has made life much easier for the crew. By the 1990's most racing boats were using spinnakers, and the class association supported the development of a chute set into the fore-deck. In recent years, the construction licence passed to Philip Betts, who carried out a subtle re-design of hull,

mast stepping and rudder to become the '300 series Yeoman'.

To some, this was a step too far, resulting in resignations from the fleet and a change to more traditional boats. The re-design was however accepted by the majority, even to the extent that similar modifications have been made to older boats, and some have been 're-born' with new 300 series hulls. The current boat is undeniably an improvement on what was already a good design, and now complies with more stringent recent legislation, and can compete with other designs currently on the market.

The sturdy and stable nature of the boat has made it particularly suitable for allowing the disabled to experience the joys of sailing, with organisations operating on Rutland Water where boats have been converted to wheel steering. Locally, The Nancy Oldfield Trust at Neatishead operates several Yeoman. Today, the largest Yeoman fleet remains at Wroxham (NBYC) with approximately 40 boats and with fleets also at Coldham Hall and Horning (HSC) and during the winter as Snowflakes SC. There are fleets further combined into a national organisation with a newsletter, manual and website www.ykboats.co.uk

This year sees the 40th anniversary of the Yeoman/Kinsman, and the National Championships are being held at The Norfolk Broads Yacht Club (Wroxham Broad) over May Bank Holiday (23-25th). Sponsorship is by Hugh Boswell Insurance Services, also from Jeckells Sails.

The sailing programme will involve 6 races with 5 to count. Celebration events in the evenings and all inquiries to: Roger Claxton (01603-433209) or Andrew Musgrave at 01603-720529



ABOVE: This Yeoman carries a spinnaker