



Waterway	Tiptree - Upstream River Cam	Date	15 August 2008
Weather	Sunny and warm	Engine hrs	3.0
Final mooring	Cambridge, Fort St George pub	Miles	10
Cruise notes		Locks	2

Crew: Tessa and Brian

Leisurely cruise up the Cam, stopped at Clayhithe for lunch then on to Cambridge.

Both locks against us and Tess managed to trip the emergency stop mechanism at Baits Bite Lock with a huge inrush of water -- luckily there were no other boats in the lock or waiting at the time. The Cam Conservator had to telephone for instructions to get the gate working again and we were on our way.

Second mishap: Brian managed to drop his new mobile phone from his unzipped pocket into the river at Fort St George. It was rescued with a boathook and fishing net and is now working good as new!

Tessa notes: *I didn't really break the lock, more sort of a temporary disablement. Anyway, it really amused two women who were watching, so at least they enjoyed it!*



Waterway	River Cam - Ft St George to Stourbridge Common	Date	15 August 2008
Weather	Pleasant late summer evening.	Engine hrs	1.5
Final mooring	Fort St George Cambridge	Miles	3
Cruise notes		Locks	0

Crew: Brian & Tessa and Brian & Carol and Ian & Cath

A early evening cruise down the River Cam to a quiet spot along by Stourbridge Common where we unpacked the picnic gear and had all manner of goodies.

After a few hours of people- and boat-watching, we motored back under the new footbridge which was all lit up. Darkness was creeping in as we approached the Fort St George again and BrianM was showing off his control -- of the steerable searchlight!



Waterway	River Cam - Fort St George - Tiptree	Date	16 August 2008
Weather	Sunny and warm	Engine hrs	3.5
Final mooring	Tiptree	Miles	9
Cruise notes		Locks	2

Crew: Brian & Carol & BrianM

Started out at midday for a gentle cruise downstream back to Tiptree.

As we passed Horningsea, we peeked in at Riverview -- deserted and overgrown. There seemed to be a lot of muddy water downstream from there.

We had planned on stopping off for a picnic lunch at the moorings just short of the Bridge Inn, but when we got there they were all full. It seemed like several Tiptree boats were having a 'meet', so we were forced to moor up at the Bridge and partake of a glass of beer in order that we could count ourselves as patrons. Excellent!

Beer and sandwiches finished, we motored on up to Bait's Bite Lock, which, needless to say, was against us and with a boat in sight coming upstream. BrianJ got off and assisted them through.

Once through, as we motored on downstream to Bottisham, we amused ourselves by 'Birchwood spotting'. The final count was six -- three 25's, two 22's and a 27.

We had just been beaten to Bottisham Lock by another boat who had just gone through and, of course, the lock was against us. So, we moored up, went along to the controls and found that the locks were completely dead. Someone walking past told us that there had just been a power cut. We amused ourselves (sleep, sodoku, chatting) for just under an hour (the rubber ducks were **very** useful!) until the power came back and we and another boat went on through.

Back to Tiptree for an interesting mooring by BrianM. Learned that a boathook would be handy to hook onto the pontoon.



Waterway	Tiptree to Ely	Date	28 August 2008
Weather	Warm, overcast and calm	Engine hrs	1.5
Final mooring	Tiptree	Miles	7
Cruise notes		Locks	0

Crew: BrianM & Tessa

Quiet run from Tiptree to start the long-awaited summer break by Brian & Tessa -- due to sudden appearance of hot sunshine in the afternoon.

Started out at 6pm. River very quiet but some rafting up at full Five Miles Inn and all moorings en-route to Ely also occupied, so very pleased to find place right outside Cutter Inn. Saw egret before Pope's Corner.

Had nice meal in Cutter Inn followed by quiet sit by the river. In the warm evening there were plenty of people about but all gone by 11pm. Speed log working.

Short stroll along the riverside. Saw a boy doing parcoir on the railings, lots of people eating fish and chips. It was all quiet by 10:30 pm.

Boat covered in cobwebs and the major theme of this trip has to be the sheer number of spiders on the boat, running round the ceiling, especially in the evening, abseiling down in front of your face and stringing webs from every bit of equipment inside and outside the boat.



Waterway	Ely, Cutter Inn to Brandon	Date	29 August 2008
Weather	Warm, largely overcast and very calm	Engine hrs	5
Final mooring	-	Miles	21
Cruise notes		Locks	0

Crew: BrianM & Tessa

Awoke to a lovely blue sky, absolutely calm, very warm night.

Started off from Ely about 10:30am after breakfast on the boat, shopping and coffee and watching a roadsweeper get stuck on the grass triangle next to the marina bridge. Saw ugly duck with three beautiful ducklings.

Slow progress up the river, ducks, swans and geese -- a group flying very low over the boat. very little river traffic, slightly cloudy after brilliant start to the day, warm and a bit muggy, virtually no wind. Saw swallows and swifts flying down to the water, splashing and rising again.

Window cleaning and cobweb dusting done by mate. Captain fearlessly lashed to the helm. Stopped for lunch near The Ship/Brandon Creek and had peaceful nap. Started off again about 2:50pm and turned into the Little Ouse at 3 pm.

Lots of weed cutting and work being done on left hand embankment with new wooden edging. Lots of ropery old boats, many with Environment Agency notices on them, some quite wrecked -- 'Antiquity' almost totally submerged. Saw a narrowboat called 'Tess'! Also saw a black swan and white swan together with cygnets as family group?

We made good progress along the Little Ouse to the head of navigation at Brandon. It took a total of 3.25 hrs and along the way we passed only one boat returning downstream. Saw the cruiser 'Maid of Berrow II' wild moored. The GOBA mooring is not in same place as on the map and it had one narrowboat with 2 guys fishing. Lakenheath Lode off to right was very weedy.



Arrival at Brandon Sluice EA mooring

Maid of Bellow II goes through Brandon Lock

Waterway	Ely, Cutter Inn to Brandon - continued	Date	29 August 2008
Weather	Warm, largely overcast and very calm	Engine hrs	-
Final mooring	Brandon	Miles	-
Cruise notes		Locks	-

Crew: BrianM & Tessa

Last few miles was very attractive countryside. Not fen-like, but the final couple of miles were increasingly narrow, winding and with overhanging trees. We had earlier removed the solar panel, closed the roof and lowered the navigation light being worried about the low clearance under a low railway bridge before Brandon. In fact, we had adequate height but at least we then had less of a problem with the trees sweeping the roof.

The boat felt very big in such a constricted space - we took comfort from the fact that Ian & Joni had got through there!

We moored at the EA mooring (no other boats) soon after 6pm after a very slow last few miles. The water is extremely clear, fast-flowing from the nearby Brandon Stauch and Lock. The sandy bottom and weeds were very clearly seen, also many fish. Chatted to a local guy and his kids who were very interested in the boat.

Strolled into town and brought back excellent fish and chips and had early night after a major influx of gnats crowding around the cockpit light.

We sat quietly in the darkness for a while listening to the rushing water.

Speed log working intermittently (when tapped).



Waterway	Brandon to Little Ouse	Date	30 August 2008
Weather	Overcast at first, then hot sunshine, calm and then Fen Blow	Engine hrs	3.25
Final mooring	Little Ouse	Miles	11.5
Cruise notes	Crew: BrianM & Tessa	Locks	0

Maid of Berrow II arrived first thing and headed for the lock, so we strolled over to talk to the couple on it and assist with the vee-gates which are not powered. Turned out he is the lock-keeper at St Neots and was surprised I didn't know that - explained that we never got that far. In his stripey t-shirt and beard he looked every inch like Para Handy! They were mooring up at the town where he said there were already a couple of other boats. Maid of Berrow II is an early 70's motor cruiser with stabilising sail and one engine. Advice from the Lock Keeper: "Twin screws are useless on the river. You are always knocking one or the other on something".

Walked over to the lock and into town along a very attractive path alongside the river to the town centre. Not a great place. Met the Lock Keeper and his wife and shopped at Aldi among other places. Had coffee on the boat and set off back down the Little Ouse.

Going under the railway bridge we took the northern arch (as recommended in the river book, we took the other coming up) and immediately slowed to below 1 mph with the engine struggling and vibrating. It slowly improved and we proceeded slowly to the GOBA mooring where a turn and a bit of reverse cleared the prop and rudder. On leaving the mooring the engine ran easily at 4.1mph as compared to the rough 3.3mph before.

Passed three cruisers going upstream, possibly CMBC outing, and after lunch at GOBA mooring went onto the Little Ouse. Lots of dragonflies, butterflies and possibly one kingfisher. Middle part of river has lots of meres alongside it and also has large plantations of trees - very attractive.

Arrived at Little Ouse at 3:30pm to see Cary on bridge indicating a mooring place just the other side of the bridge, so I needed to turn around. Took me about 5 attempts to get the bow into the face of a hot Fen Blow in a river not much wider than the boat's length -- oh for a bow thruster! Joined Cary & Ricki in their shady garden -- after stopping in their garden to look at the 2 peacocks and a peahen they have loaned from a friend who has been served with a noise order and needed to get them moved -- a kind of bird ASBO.

Decided to entertain C & R on the boat, so Tess put together a marvellous pasta dish and wine was opened! Cary appeared with a large scythe to clear a path to our mooring.

A very jolly evening eating, drinking and talking about travels to come and travels done. Ricki brought two salads, one beetroot and one cabbage. We also had Amaretti biscuits that Cary had to go home to get. Our guests left about 10:30pm and so to bed.



Waterway	Little Ouse to Great Ouse	Date	31 August 2008
Weather	Misty, then warm & overcast finally humid and overcast.	Engine hrs	4.5
Final mooring	Tiptree	Miles	18.5
Cruise notes		Locks	0

Crew: BrianM & Tessa

Woke at 7:30am to a very misty morning. I wiped inside windows and Brian wiped outside, loads of spiders webs. Very quiet and peaceful with pigeons cooing.

9am after breakfast walked up to the Old Church. No sign of movement from C&R so we went for a short walk along the Little Ouse. When we returned, C&R were up so we had coffee and chatted and went off about 11:15. Brian turned the boat around and we didn't bump into the bridge. Engine started even though the voltage was low. Still misty but visibility on the river was fine.

At 12:30 lunch at Black Horse at Littleport. Very unexciting roast beef and no horseradish! It was accompanied by roast pots, peas and sweet corn, mashed swede, green cauli, Yorkshire pud and gravy.

River very quiet indeed and as we passed the mooring at The Ship there were several boats there and one even rafted up. A woman twice shouted something at us, rushing across her boat to do so. Despite throttling back I could not hear and we decided not to turn around and find out. But we did notice that we were the only boat travelling on the river. In fact, we reached Littleport without seeing a single other boat - either moored or moving.

Began to wonder if the river was closed somewhere but finally at Littleport we saw a small boat moving and further on towards Ely saw a few more.

Hit another weed problem south of Ely. Sudden reduction in speed and had the same rough running and lack of power afterwards. We went into and out of the EA mooring at Stretham -- which once again solved the problem.

Quiet run into Tiptree with a slight shower as we approached Upware Marina. The Five Miles Inn was covered with people.

We moored at Tiptree and unpacked the boat -- forgetting to empty the fridge!