

Cruising and Mooring Tips

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Bow Thruster.

- I have made reference many times throughout the cruising and mooring tips pages to Bow Thrusters and have put this information at the beginning so those who may not know will understand when mentioned what they actually do.
- A Bow Thruster is an additional aid to manoeuvring a boat. It provides a boost to make the bow/front go port/left or starboard/right without even moving the steering wheel and without throttling backward or forward. Please note that wind and the river current may cause the boat to drift. In strong currents the boat may drift/move rapidly.
- When turning a boat using engine power and normal steering the stern/back will swing. This is not the case with a Bow Thruster. This is very helpful for mooring and leaving moorings especially if it is just a couple hiring a boat. The Bow Thruster is also very helpful turning the boat around and when reversing as a boat is far less responsive to steering when going astern.
- Some Bow Thrusters are on timers. The boatyard engineer should inform you. If this is the case just before approaching or as you are leaving moorings ensure it is turned on.
- A few of the latest boats now have a bow/front and a stern/rear thruster which makes manoeuvring the boat even simpler.
- Please note that the bow thruster is an aid and not a replacement of the steering wheel. It is not designed for prolonged continuous use. Using a few second bursts at a time is normally sufficient.

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Choosing a boat

- **Types of boats.** There are several types of craft on offer and it's basically personal choice. The websites or brochures will detail the different types of craft but there are some things you may want to take into consideration.
- **Selecting size of boat and number of berths.** When selecting a boat, study the floor plan and the description in great detail. You need to ensure that the cabins and sleeping arrangements meet your requirements and are adequate for the size of your party. For example a 10 berth boat is unlikely to be suitable for 10 adults as it's possible that some berths may only be large enough for children. A 10 berth boat may also be unsuitable for a party of 6 single friends wanting separate beds and preferably separate cabins as the boat may only have 5 doubles. As stated study the floor plan and description in detail. If in doubt contact the relevant boatyard.

On some of the boats and in particular boats for larger parties, not all of the cabins/bedrooms may be full height in the bed area itself. This is often the case when the cabins are to the side of a central walk way. If this is a double bed it can be a little awkward for the person sleeping on the inside to get out of bed having a partner in the way. Some cabins may be restricted for space generally and may have limited access to the side of the bed making it necessary to poke your legs into a recess. This does tend to be more the case with boats for larger parties.

If cabin space and general comfort is top of your list, for a larger party you may be better advised to hire two separate boats.

Some craft have walk round beds which to me is an important feature as if you feel the need to get up in the middle of the night you don't have to scramble over your partner to get in and out. The other option is to have single beds. The more agile shouldn't find it a problem.

Some berths/beds may include seating area's that the bed requires making up of a night. I find it best to base the boat on how many separate beds and cabins are required.

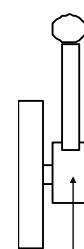
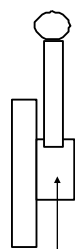
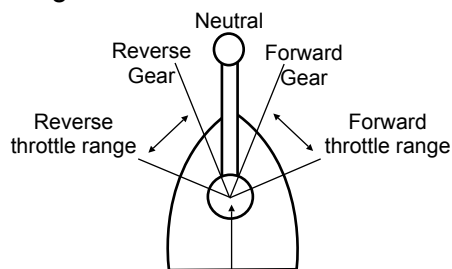
A boat for a couple is normally adequate in size but for larger parties it may be beneficial to have a spare extra berth/cabin for a storage area without compromising on space if you chose a boat that is that bit longer.

- **Boats suitable for disabled people.** I do not believe that any holiday hire craft can accommodate on board wheelchair use nor provide easy/wide access. If a party member has limited mobility but can get around without a wheel chair a single level floor boat is likely to be more suitable.
- **Norfolk broads disabled day boat hire.** For day boats and trips that are disabled friendly with wheelchair facilities please visit www.nancyoldfield.org.
- **Steering positions and design of boat.** Most of the raised centre cockpit boats have great all round vision which is very helpful when reversing and general awareness. Some have single floor level with just raised seating others the saloon is part of the cockpit. It is normally necessary to lower/open the sliding roof and fold the windscreen when going through a bridge. On a fine day you will probably have the roof open anyway. Some craft have dual driving positions outside and inside and some of these also have single floor level. There are also rear positioned cockpit craft. These also offer great all round vision especially for reversing. The front steering craft have great forward vision but vision is restricted to the rear. I personally prefer the single floor level that these type of craft offer giving the boat a much roomier feel. Many offer opening roofs of which some have a split sliding roof which is useful on a sunny but windy day. It is not normally necessary to lower/open the sliding roof when going through a bridge on this design craft but check with the boatyard official.
- **Washing facilities.** In addition to wash basins the vast majority of boats have showers normally located in WC's. A small minority of boats have baths generally with shower head and hose. Although using more water I personally prefer a bath as many shower areas are rather compact. Unlike myself lol
- **Manoeuvring aid.** Some craft have bow thrusters which is a big help for manoeuvrability, especially it's just you and your partner or a friend. See the bow thruster topic for more detail.
- **Power.** Normally provided by 12 volt batteries but many craft also have a 240 volt inverter. Additional 240 Volt shore power connection is provided on some craft and this seems to be becoming more popular. A small amount of boats also have generators but these are predominantly on the electrically powered boats.
- **Electrically powered boats.** The vast majority of holiday hire craft are diesel but there are some electrically powered available for hire. These use batteries and an electric motor with a generator that automatically cuts in when the batteries need recharging. These craft offer quieter cruising and lower running costs but hire charges are liable to be more expensive. The on board appliances are likely to be 240 volt mains electric and may be similar to what you used to at home. This is excellent if shore power is available but may not be ideal should you have to rely on running the generator for cooking etc. You could find prolonged generator noise disturbing for both you and your neighbours.

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General Cruising

- I believe all modern hire craft have single lever control and are normally operated as the diagram below. Some have a separate button to pull out for neutral. The boat yard official will show you how to start the engine and how to use the control lever.



Pull out the lever from neutral and push slightly forward to retain neutral and allow throttle increase whilst remaining stationary.

- **Drive on the right of river and give way to sailing boats and large vessels.**

Your reverse gear is your brake and it takes longer to stop when you are travelling with the current. You can seldom bring the boat to a complete standstill depending on current and wind conditions. You may need to use short bursts of reverse or forward adjusting steering as necessary to remain static whilst waiting for an obstruction to move. If available a bow thruster is also a help.

- **Turning a boat round** (equivalent of a cars 3 point turn) You don't need to keep changing the steering to the opposite lock for turning a boat around as the direction of the steering wheel has very limited affect when reversing.

I find the best way to turn around is to give your self plenty of room allowing for the stern/rear to swing. Turn the wheel on full lock for the direction you intend to turn and use alternate throttle forward and reverse until the boat has turned. A burst of forward throttle on full lock tends to pivot the boat momentarily before it moves forward. If turning in a confined space just as the boat starts going forward I give a short burst in reverse just enough to stop the boat going forward and continue to use alternate throttle forward and reverse until the boat has turned. If you find you are fighting the current then perhaps try turning to the opposite way i.e clockwise instead of anti. Go with the flow. If you are in strong currents the boat may tend to drift sideways as you are turning so give your self plenty of room from obstructions and bridges. A bow thruster is a great aid to turning a boat and often a simple u turn is achievable.

- **Practise** It's worthwhile to have a few practice runs at mooring/parking the boat at out of the way moorings preferably against a soft bank with no other boats around or at least an area that has plenty of room. Always approach moorings slowly and against the current unless the wind is stronger. You can find more advice on mooring a boat by selecting the mooring up tab.
- **Cruising in the dark is not permitted** so plan your journey allowing ample time to reach your destination and locate a mooring.
- **Give way to sailing boats** You should give way to sail even if it means coming to a halt or changing direction. If it is tacking (zig zagging across the river) I normally wait until it has turned toward the opposite bank and pass behind it. I also keep my eye on the crew as they may signal/direct you to take a certain direction.
- **Speed Limits** Normally between 3 mph and 6 mph. Most of the time your speed will be 5 or 6 mph. If you estimate an average of 5 mph when calculating journey times you won't be far wrong. Your boat will list details of the estimated speed using the rev counter. You may be going faster than indicated when you are going with a strong current and slower when against. Looking at the speed you are passing the river bank will give you an idea of speed. Keep an eye on the wash your boat is giving off. Be careful when going through Reedham where currents can be exceptionally strong pushing you along rapidly. The Broads's authority personnel are stationed on the bank and they have a constant eye out for speeding boats. The river police and Broads's authority are normally friendly and helpful so should you need assistance their boats are recognisable being very low but with a quite long open back and a blue flag on the stern/back.
- **Passing moored craft** In advance of approaching moored check the amount of wash your boat is causing. If possible give moored craft a wide berth and to reduce wash decrease speed if necessary. Wash can cause a boat to rock about bashing it against the river bank. This can also be hazardous for people who are cooking onboard. It is also polite to give anglers a wide birth where possible.
- **Overtaking.** Remember to drive on the right hand side of the river. Under normal circumstances should you need to overtake another cruiser it is usual to pass on the left/port side. Discretion is required when a boat may be far over to the left/port, changing direction, turning off or mooring up.

In general overtaking a cruiser on the right/starboard could be a recipe for disaster. Unlike roads the rivers do not have lane markings and the riverbanks are not in a straight line but constantly changing shape.

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General Cruising Continued

- **Overtaking Continued.** The helm/steering is normally on the left/port side and boats do not usually have mirrors. With many boats it is impossible to see behind nor down the right/starboard side so the helmsman of the boat you are overtaking may have no idea that you are there and you risk being forced into the riverbank, running aground, hitting overhanging trees or a solid object such as a navigation post. You could also be responsible for forcing the boat you are overtaking into a head on collision with oncoming traffic.

When you have passed a boat leave a good distance making sure that you are well clear before moving back and do so at a very gradual/slight angle. Look behind you now and again in case someone is trying to pass you.

- **Overtaking sailing craft** is often different depending on the position and direction of travel that they are taking. You should give way to sail even if it means coming to a halt or changing direction. If it is tacking (zig zagging across the river) I normally wait until it has turned toward the opposite bank and pass behind it. I also keep my eye on the crew as they may signal/direct you to take a certain path.

- **Fuel usage.** If possible plan your journey so that you are travelling with the current you will arrive quicker and save fuel. I'm afraid fuel usage is a bit like how long is a piece of string but I have read figures from official publications estimating 2 litres/ .5 gallon to 5 litres/ 1.1 gallon an hour. This will differ greatly depending on the size of boat, weather conditions, speed/rev's and if travelling with or against the current. The figures are based on travelling at a maximum of 6mph.

Fuel deposit charges vary but I often pay £125 and use approx £110 of fuel in a week. The boat normally holds more than enough fuel for a 2 week holiday. It is usual to pick up the boat with a full tank and it is refilled on your return to the boatyard and the cost taken from the fuel deposit. In most cases I find I get a bit of cash back.

- **Navigation.**

I have provided a basic map of the Norfolk Broads on this site but you may wish to purchase a large more detailed one. These are normally available at boat yards or you may wish to order one from your holiday provider in advance. Most places where the river branches there are signposts but they normally only name the more prominent places like Norwich, Yarmouth, Potter Heigham, Beccles etc.

Breydon Water. Should you decide to go from the Southern Broads to the Northern Broads or vice versa you will need to cross Breydon Water. This is a very wide part of the Broads which could feel rather daunting to a first timer.

When you travel across Breydon Water you need to keep between the red and the green posts. The majority of green posts have white tips. When approaching or leaving Yarmouth pass the yellow post before turning.

Yarmouth. Due to extreme currents and 2 bridges, it's important to arrive at Yarmouth at the recommended time so check your tide table. The ideal time to arrive at Yarmouth is at slack water approx 1 ¼ Hours after low water and recommended you keep within one hour before low water and two hours after. It's also quite safe to pass through at high water slack as well, as long as there is sufficient clearance under the bridges for the boat in question. The downside of that is punching the tide in both directions, instead of having it with you, as is the case at low water slack.

I wouldn't recommend this for craft approaching from the Southern Broads across Breydon Water as if the bridge clearance is insufficient you will have to turn around and make the return journey. This is even more important if it is anywhere near approaching dark. There are Yarmouth Bridge clearance gauges on the River Waveney and The River Yare just before crossing Breydon Water but you need to take into consideration that if the tide is coming in there will be less clearance by the time you reach Yarmouth.

If you are travelling from the Northern Broads you could arrive early, moor up and wait till it is safe to continue. Yarmouth has a rise and fall of in excess of 6 ft so you need to leave plenty of slack on the ropes if you decide to stay. Yarmouth Yacht Station Tel: 01493 842794.

The closest moorings to Yarmouth going North is just beyond The Stracey Arms wind pump located on the left hand side of the river approx 9 miles away so bear this in mind if it is anywhere nearing dark. There are many moorings chargeable for mooring overnight.

Further information and maps for crossing Breydon water and through Great Yarmouth can be found on the "Crossing Breydon Water" page,

Returning Boat. When you are on the last night before returning the boat it is best not to moor up too far away. Most boatyards require your return by 8.00 or 9.00. I did get caught out many years ago and only once as a youngster. We moored up quite a distance away with the intention of getting up early for our return journey. We woke up to dense fog. Help!!!

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Bridges

- Ensure that all crew are safely below deck when navigating bridges. There are some low bridges so check the height/air draft that is indicated on your boat and compare it with the gauge on the bridge. If you can comfortably see that the gap is above the height of your boat it should be ok. If applicable ensure TV Ariel is down. Remember depending on the individual craft. The height of your boat is with the top/sliding roof down and windscreen folded. Do this in advance maybe a few of hundred yards before the bridge. It may be an idea to ask a boatyard official what the boat height is with the roof up as some bridges have ample height and may be unnecessary to lower the roof and windscreen especially helpful on a wet or cold day. Again seek advice from the boatyard official.
- If you are cruising against the tide give way to craft cruising with the tide as they will find it more difficult to slow down and tread water/come to a standstill.
- On southern Broads The very restricted height bridges that need low water are At Thorpe Norwich and By Beccles towards Geldeston. At the Thorpe railway bridges (one each end of the cut) it's best to decide if you intend staying before you go under the bridge for the water may rise while you are moored up and you could end up waiting hours for low water to get back through. There is a cut in a couple of hundred yards before bridge (travelling from Brundall) where you can moor free of charge. You can then walk a short distance to the railway crossing footbridge.
- On the Northern Broads it is Wayford Bridge, Wroxham and Potter Heigham. There are also 2 bridges at Yarmouth that have limited clearance at high water. This is very important should you be coming from the Southern Broads across Breydon Water. For more details See the "Crossing Breydon Water" page . Yarmouth Yacht Station Tel: 01493 842794.

- **Wroxham Bridge. For most if not all boatyards now make it compulsory to use the Pilot take the boat through.**

Although there is a charge for this service I would recommend using it even if your boat yard has not made it compulsory. Some boatyards may include this service in the hire cost.

The Bridge Pilots are highly experienced and pass under the bridge at a fair pace. There is a natural tendency to go too slowly leaving you vulnerable to crosswinds and currents. See youtube video page for film. Wroxham Pilots No: 07775 297638.

Please be aware that the Pilot will not board your boat from outside The Hotel Wroxham as the moorings are for mooring fee paying customers only.

- **Potter Heigham Bridge. You must get the pilot to take the boat through.**

Although the listings and onboard plaque may indicate that a particular boat is able to pass through all Norfolk Broads bridges, Potter Heigham may only be achievable in ideal tidal conditions.

Due to varying river levels even at low water there will often be insufficient clearance for an outward and return journey within your holiday period.

The figures that I have sourced would suggest a clearance of only 6ft 5ins at average high water and an approximate rise and fall of only 4 to 6 inches based on a single tide.

If you are planning a trip to Potter Heigham and hoping to get through the bridge I'd suggest ringing ahead of the planned trip i.e. the day before or on the morning to The Phoenix Fleet Pilots Office at Potter Heigham, Tel 07990 686097 or 01692 670460 between 8.30 a.m. and 5.00 p.m.

The pilot is best qualified to inform you if your outward and return passage is achievable during the chosen dates and if so when you need to return for passing back through the bridge.

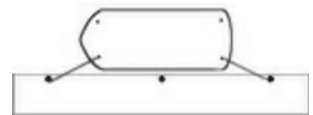
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Mooring

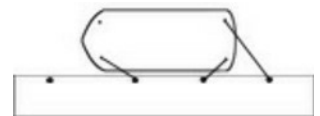
- **Approach moorings against the current or wind which ever is strongest.** It's a good idea to consult the tide chart. This will give you a good indication of which way the current is flowing. When the tide is going out it is going towards Yarmouth. Consult the map to see if you are going towards or away from Yarmouth. You may want to bring boat to a standstill and see which way the boat drifts. If you start moving forward you are going with the current in which case go past the mooring and turn boat around to bring you against the flow. Approach mooring very slowly constantly adjusting the wheel to bring you in at a gradual angle. Don't forget that reverse gear is your brake. You can bring the stern/rear closer to the bank by turning the wheel full lock away from the bank and using short bursts of throttle alternating between forward and reverse. If you have a bow thruster this makes life easier but ensure it's turned on as some are on timers.
- If the bow/front of the boat is close to the bank but the stern/back is out don't forget you can walk towards the front/bow with the back/stern rope to shorten the gap between you and the bank. With a forward steering boat that has an opening roof I sometimes place my stern/back ropes along the side of the boat towards the bow/front. Depending on the length of the boat and the length of your rope it may be possible for it to reach all the way. Once I have the bow/front of the boat in and my wife has the bow/front rope on shore I simply step through the gap of the open roof straight onto the bank with with the stern/back rope. Remember to ensure that the boat is out of gear and in neutral before getting off but Keep the engine running until your ropes are safely secured.
- Take extreme care stepping on wooden banks as on a wet day as these can be incredibly slippery.
- **Be very careful not to get knots in your ropes** as this could prevent you from using rings and make general tying and untying of ropes much more difficult. Ensure your ropes are tidy and are not likely to trip anyone over. Don't forget to check tides ensuring the ropes have enough slack. For a River Level rise and fall chart please select the "Bridge Gaps" Tab. The position and availability of mooring posts will determine how you may tie up the boat.

- This method restrains forward and backward motion and keeps the boat close to the bank.

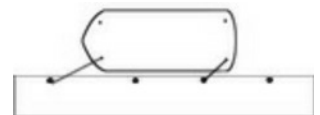


Optional 3rd rope

- This method also restrains forward and backward motion and keeps the boat reasonably close to the bank. If a post is available you could add the 3rd rope to keep closer to bank.



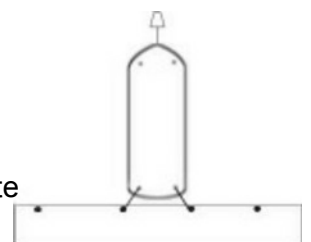
- This is no good. Ropes should oppose one another. This method would allow the boat to go forward and backward or stick out far into the water depending on the current and wind conditions.



- **Stern on mooring.** I have found that with hire boats in general the steering has very little effect in reverse. When in position I put steering on full lock and spin the boat to line up for reversing towards the bank. I leave the boat on full lock and reverse very slowly. I often normally find that tick over is sufficient. As the boat starts to skew round I give a very short burst of forward throttle to bring the boat straight, put back into reverse and continue very slowly reversing, repeating this action as necessary.

If the boat has a bow thruster you can use this to help guide the boat and nudge the bow/front as required to assist keeping the boat travelling in a straight line. If there is enough room you could pull in side on to bank, secure one stern/back rope and bring the boat round using bow thruster and pulling on the remaining back/stern rope.

This method of tying ropes is for stern on moorings. Some places specify stern on mooring only. It's normal, especially in strong winds or currents to lower the mud weight. Make sure your legs/body are not liable to get tangled when you lower the mud Weight. It is safer to lower the weight than to drop/throw. Once mud weight is down take up the slack rope by tying round the cleat. It's a good idea to write a note reminding you to take up the mud weight and leave on the dash board.



- One final note on mooring. Please spare a thought for private boat owners. I would suggest that if conveniently possible you moor amongst other hire craft. This is not compulsory or even expected but I can imagine their heart rate rising when they see a hire craft trying to squeeze in to a small gap next to their pride and joy. I know mine does when I see someone trying to push an uncontrollable fully loaded shopping trolley through a small gap near my car.

Handling a boat single handed

- If you are boating alone you will need to check with the boat hire company to see if they accept solo boat hirers.

- **Type of boat**

I always chose a boat that has an opening roof above the helm allowing easy access to the side for stepping onto the river bank. A boat with bow thrusters is preferable by far. The thrusters are an extremely useful aid when arriving at or leaving moorings.

The type of boat is personal choice but I prefer the single level bath tub/Caribbean type which I find easier to get on and off when approaching or leaving a mooring. These boats normally have a door at the front and the rear allowing access both ends. They usually have ropes both sides at the bow/front and back/stern. Some other type boats often have 1 each side at the back/stern but only a single rope to the centre of the bow/front.

The helm/steering is located toward the front which I find more convenient for stepping off with the bow/front rope when mooring up. In addition I find it easier when leaving a mooring as I often pull the bow/front toward the bank making the back/stern go out, board the boat from the front and reverse out. This saves me from having to walk the length or part length of the boat to reach the helm.

- **Preparation**

I normally run the stern/back ropes along the sides of the boat so that they can be reached from the helm. I do the same with the port/left side bow/front rope. So that I don't mix the ropes up I leave a small gap between the back/stern rope. If the ropes aren't long enough maybe the boatyard staff will provide longer ones.

- **Heading toward and approaching moorings**

I aim to moor with the helm/steering next to the bank. On approach If applicable I open the roof and when nicely alongside and stationary grab the bow/front rope and if necessary I cover and use the seat as a step to board the side of the boat and then step onto the bank with the rope. I quickly tie the bow/front rope and then grab the stern/rear rope and tie. After that I make any necessary rope adjustments and tie securely.

I try to plan my destination for arrival near slack water or against the current. That's if the moorings are on the left and in the direction of travel.

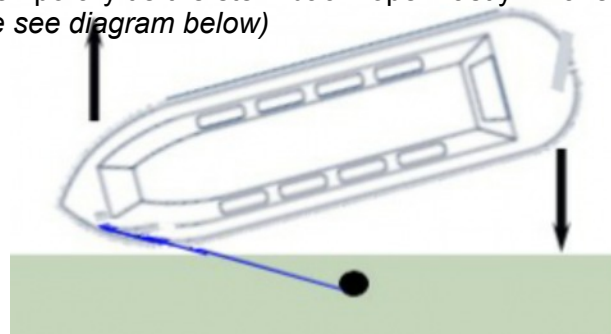
If the moorings are on the right I try to plan my destination for arrival near slack water or having the current with me. I then go beyond the moorings and turn the boat round so I'm against the current.

Currents tend not to be as much of an issue on The Northern Broads although there can be strong currents from Acle and towards Yarmouth.

If I am on the river bank and the stern/back of the boat is sticking out away from the bank I put the steering on full lock away from the riverbank and use very short bursts of forward and reverse until the boat is parallel to the bank. If you have a bow thruster this is useful for nudging the bow/front of the boat towards the bank.

Another method I use for bringing the stern/back to shore -

I turn the steering full lock away from the riverbank, step ashore and tie the bow/front rope to a post toward the stern/back of the boat. I then step back onboard, put in forward gear and gently throttle until back/stern swings alongside. If the boat is not coming in I give a bit more slack on the rope. I then take the boat out of gear. Step ashore and temporary tie the stern/back rope. Lastly I make any necessary rope adjustments and tie securely. (Please see diagram below)



- **Leaving moorings**

When leaving a mooring current and weather permitting I check the steering is on full lock away from the bank, pull the bow/front toward me ensuring that the fender is protecting the hull. When the back/stern is well away from the bank step onboard and reverse a little until clear of the riverbank and other boats. I then select forward gear, open up the throttle and adjust the steering as necessary taking care to insure that the stern/back does not swing in to the the bank or another boat. .

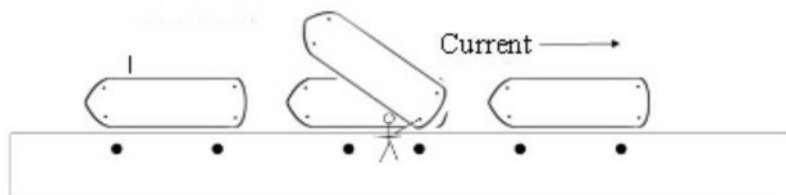
As I have mentioned many times I am no expert and have had no specialist training whatsoever. I am just providing tips based on my own experience which I hope you will find useful.

- **Leaving Moorings.**

- **Remember the rear/stern will swing.** This is very important when leaving a mooring as if you put the boat's steering on a sharp lock whilst close to the bank the rear will scrape along the bank and you will be unable to pull away. If you have one use the bow thruster as this will take you out and the stern/back will not swing.
- Start your engine and if you have one ensure bow thruster is turned on. Remember to return the gear/throttle stick to the neutral position after the engine is started and will tick over ok. Before leaving mooring if applicable take TV Ariel down, undo each rope and retie it so it is easy to remove. If you have a 3rd rope undo it and stow onboard.

- **With the boat facing to go against the current.** (If the wind is blowing stronger in the opposite direction to the current then leave the moorings as if you are with the current)

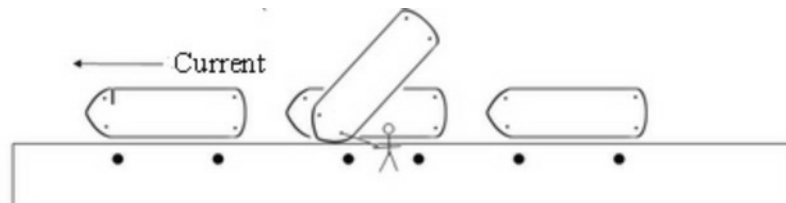
Start engine and if you have one ensure bow thruster is on. Untie the bow/front rope. A crew member to untie stern/back rope holding the rope toward bow/front of boat to stop it hitting the boat behind and walk a few paces towards the bow/front to give more clearance. The bow/front should go out. After the boat is well out almost pointing to the far bank, the crew member should board the boat with the rope. Pilot/driver should pull away forward. Watch your stern, If you have one bow thruster may be used to assist. Navigate to chosen direction.



- In strong currents /winds you will need to react a lot quicker, especially if moored between other boats. It is not often that currents are that strong but between Reedham and Yarmouth and on to Acle are about the strongest. If you arrive or depart moorings approx 1 hour after high or low water the current tends to be more slack.

- **With the boat facing to go with the current.** (If the wind is blowing stronger in the opposite direction to the current then leave the moorings as if you are against the current)

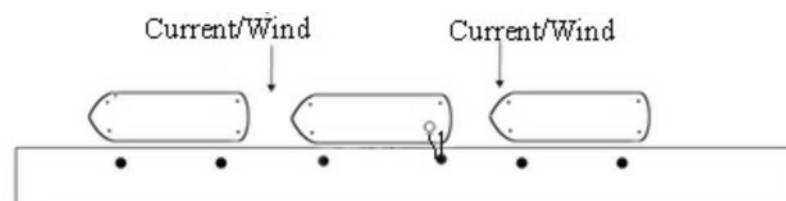
Start engine and if you have one ensure bow thruster is on. Untie the stern/back rope. A crew member to untie bow/front rope holding the rope toward stern/back of boat to stop it hitting the boat in front and walk a few paces towards the stern/back to give more clearance. The stern/back should go out. After the boat is well out almost pointing to the far bank, the crew member should board the boat with the rope. Pilot/driver should reverse until well clear. If you have one bow thruster may be used to assist. Navigate to chosen direction.



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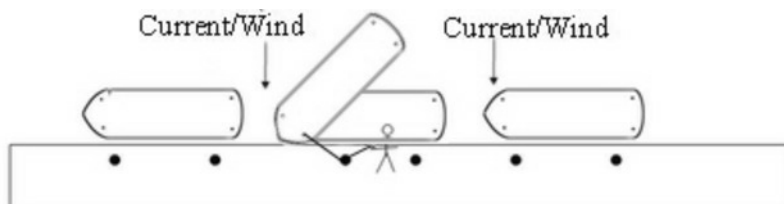
- **With the current or and strong winds pushing the boat against the bank making it impossible to pull away from moorings.**

Start the engine and if you have one ensure bow thruster is on. If you do have a bow thruster Ensure the helm/Steering wheel is set in the centre position first! undo the bow/front rope and stow onboard then a crew member undo the stern/rear rope, loop it around the post and climb aboard. Once the bow thruster has pushed the bow out so as to clear any craft moored close by, flip the rope off the stern post and pull on board. Put throttle into slow forward position and leave slowly until well clear of all nearby craft.



Leaving Moorings Continued.

- If you don't have a bow thruster untie the stern/back rope. A crew member to untie bow/front rope and wrap and hold the rope around a post toward stern/back of boat. The Pilot/driver to turn the wheel full lock toward the bank, gently throttle forward into the bank. Ensure that the fenders or rubber protection are preventing the boats hull from being scuffed. The stern/back should go out. After the boat is well out almost pointing to the far bank, the crew member should board the boat with the rope. Pilot/driver should reverse until well



When moored stern on

- Start engine and if you have one check the bow thruster is on. Pull up and stow the mud weight. Remove both stern/back ropes, board boat. Put in forward gear and gently pull away.

If the mud weight is stuck. I place the rope over my shoulder, keeping my back straight bend my knees slightly (only enough to give a lift of a few inches) take up the slack pulling the rope taught on my shoulder. I then stand up using my legs and shoulder to lift the mud weight free from the suction of the mud. If you try this method **extreme care is needed**. Don't risk putting your back out or being pulled overboard.

I have never had to do this but if the mud weight is still too difficult to lift, I would take up the slack in the mud weight rope, pull it as tight as possible and secure it to the cleat. Ensure there is sufficient room behind and move the boat a little slowly astern. This should free the weight from the suction of the mud. If it is not possible to go astern I would do the same with the rope but go gently forward until the mud weight is free. I would then leave the engine running but ensure that neutral is selected. If necessary I would retie the stern ropes before lifting and stowing the mud weight. We are now ready to untie and depart the mooring.

I have not tried this but if the boat is equipped with a bow thruster I think it may be possible to use this to move the boat enough to free the mud weight. I would have the engine running but keep in neutral. I would only try this method if there is reasonable gap to both sides of the boat. There needs to be enough room to the side and direction that you intend to nudge the boat and a reasonable distance between any boat that may be moored to the opposite side. If not the force of the bow thruster could push one boat into another or possibly the river bank.

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Life Onboard.

- **Toilets** have holding tanks onboard which need pumping out when they are full. If you use on shore toilets where possible you will minimise need for toilet tank pump outs. If you do require a pump out you can find a list of locations on the Facilities page. The cost of toilet pump outs vary but as an example the present charges for 2017 at Norwich Yacht station are £12 for one tank, £15 for two and £18 for three. The onboard toilets easily block so never place anything down them but toilet paper.
- **Water** is stored onboard in a holding tank which supplies tap water, showers and flushing water on some models of toilets. There is normally a separate tap providing purified water for the kettle. It's best to take your own bottled drinking water.

The water is circulated by electric pump which you will normally hear running whilst in use. It's not unusual to occasionally hear the pump run for a brief moment as it keeps the water pressure up to a certain level. If the pump continues when you are not running water you may have left a tap on. If the pump runs continuously with no tap turned on you have probably run out of water. You will need to turn off the pump until you refill the water tank. The switch to turn off the pump is often located on the dashboard or side of it but the boatyard engineer should show you it's location.

You may need to top up daily or perhaps every other day depending how thrifty you are with it. Try not to waste water. If you are moored near a water supply I would take advantage and top up regardless. Most craft I have hired do not have a water level gauge so even more reason to keep water topped up. The water refill point on your boat should be clearly marked. Be careful not to put water in the diesel refill point. Water is normally free or included in mooring fees. The B.A moorings simply request a small donation from £1 which normally goes in a tube holding coins.

The engine heats your domestic water so it is hottest when you have just done a journey. We normally shower at the end of a journey not first thing in the morning when the water may not be hot enough for several showers.

A list of water supply locations can be found on the "Facilities" page of my website . This list can also be downloaded and printed as a PDF.

- **Lights/electric** is provided through 12 volt batteries. Hire Craft have separate batteries for domestic use and starting the engine. This means that should you run the domestic batteries flat you should still be able to start the engine.

The skipper's handbook normally recommends a good 4 hours cruising per day to keep the batteries in a good state of charge but I have found that providing you are careful not to waste electricity an average of 2 ½ to 3 hours may be sufficient.

To conserve power don't leave lights on unnecessarily. Only have the television on if you are watching it. Televisions often use a 240 volt inverter which normally has a separate switch. Ensure the inverter is switched off when not required as it still draws some power.

Microwaves and toasters use the 240 volt inverter and the skipper's handbook states that the engine should be running when using these high power consumption appliances. A few boats additionally have generators. Due consideration to other people should be given when running engines and generators. Please see the "running engines" section on the next page.

Most craft have at least one 12 v socket similar to a cars accessory/cigarette lighter. If you have the relevant plug charger/adaptor these can be used to charge your mobile phones, digital cameras and camcorders etc. As many boats provide 240 volt power by an inverter I additionally take the relevant mains chargers/adaptors. It's better to cover your options. If I need to take advantage of using the mains chargers I use whilst cruising so as to reduce the drain on the boats batteries. Many boat yards offer hair dryers and some also clothes irons.

Don't forget to take at least 1 torch. My the wife and I normally take a tiny pocket torch each which we keep with us at all times for our return journey to the boat especially as some moorings are not lit. We also take a larger torch to keep on board which is essential should you be unfortunate enough to drain your domestic batteries broads guide convenient using a torch to find the loo should I need to get out of bed in the middle of the night.

- **Shore Power.** Additional 240 Volt shore power connection is provided on some craft and this seems to be becoming more popular. This allows you to connect to shore power sockets where provided at some moorings. This will allow use of all of your appliances without discharging the boat batteries and eliminates the need to run the engine to use high power consumption devices such as microwaves and toasters etc.

The cards are £1 each and the whole amount is taken from the card as soon as you use it. Any unused credit remains at the electric point so before inserting the card it's worth checking to see if there is any credit remaining from the previous user. New electric points were installed for 1st April 2017 Old cards will not work but I believe can be exchanged for new ones through The Broads Authority.

Life Onboard Continued.

- **Running Engines.** On occasions there may be a need to run the engine to charge batteries or heat water etc. Etiquette suggests we endeavour not to run boat engines whilst moored up where other boats may be close enough to cause them a nuisance. Should it deem necessary to run the engine the general consensus makes it more acceptable between the hours of 08:00 and 20:00.

Should you need to run the engine for a prolonged period or outside of these hours it would be polite to let your neighbours know the reason. I would also only run the engine at no more than a fast tick over.

You may need to start the engine early in the morning in order to leave the moorings and head for your next destination. I normally first untie and retie the ropes to ensure they can be easily released and raise the mud weight if applicable. I then start the engine and check that gauges display as they should and check water is being pumped out of the exhaust. Once the engine ticks over smoothly we are untied and on our way. This normally takes no more than 2 or 3 minutes of running the engine before departure.

- **Fishing and moorings.** Broads Authority 24 hour moorings are primarily for the mooring of boats and take priority over people fishing. I would personally not recommend fishing from the bank of pub moorings as I am sure the owners would want their moorings to be available for customers. You can always fish from onboard the boat and just reel in whilst a boat is coming in to moor near you.
- **Heating.** The vast majority of craft that I have hired the heating is provided by warm air blow heaters running on diesel and circulated by electric fan. I have never found it necessary to run the engine whilst using this type of heating providing there is sufficient charge in the domestic batteries to start the heater and run the fan. Check with the boat yard official and skippers handbook for recommendations of their usage.
- **Diesel fuel.** You will normally be charged a fuel deposit when you book your boating holiday. I believe it varies from boatyard to boatyard but as an example my 1 week in September 2012 is £125. It's usual for the boat to have a full tank of fuel when you first board it. The tank is checked on your return and any unused credit will be reimbursed. On the other hand if your deposit has not covered the usage you will be required to pay the difference. I tend to be in credit but this obviously depends on how much cruising, with or against the current, usage of heater and general running of engine to recharge batteries and heat water. With a two week boating holiday there has been sufficient fuel on board and I have not needed to purchase any additional diesel. This is obviously dependent on all the factors previously mentioned. Very few boats have a fuel gauge. Most boats I have been on have a measuring stick that you have to regularly dip in the fuel tank. Ask the boat yard official for advice.
- **Electrically powered boats.** The vast majority of holiday hire craft are diesel but there are some electrically powered available for hire. These use batteries and an electric motor with a generator that automatically cuts in when the batteries need recharging.
- **Luggage.** It is usually more convenient to take soft suitcases and bags as they take up less room and are easier to stow away than hard suit cases. If you are returning to the boatyard the night before your return home you could leave your suitcases in your car. Some boatyards retain your car keys so it is advisable to take a spare set or ensure you arrive at the boatyard while it is open/staffed. Large bin bags are useful for holding laundry and rubbish.

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