

# SAILING

***Ever fancied a trip down the Crouch followed by a short coastal hop across to Mersea Island or Brightlingsea? Piece of cake!***

***Many club members will be familiar with areas of the North Sea and Wash as used during Norfolk Week. These sorry tales are from the Lynn News on the 22nd September 2009.***

THE behaviour of a boat owner has been blasted as "utterly ridiculous" after his crew became lost across the Wash at the weekend after setting off with only a mobile 'phone, which became low on battery power.

The three-man crew – which included a 12-year-old girl – ran aground in their yacht across the Wash on Saturday night.

The 29-foot vessel, which had set off from Wisbech on its journey to Snettisham, had no VHF radio or compass flares, said Hunstanton RNLI press officer Geoff Needham.

The boat had left the River Nene at around 10am and, with a falling tide, had run aground on a sandbank around 1pm in the Wash, where the crew stayed until the tide refloated them.

The yacht had then made its way towards Snettisham, said Mr Needham, but darkness fell and the crew became "completely lost".

Great Yarmouth coastguard requested the launch of Hunstanton lifeboat around 9pm, after receiving a call from a member of the public.

The lifeboat deployed para flares to illuminate the search area and at 10.30pm, Hunstanton coastguard unit found the vessel about half a mile off Snettisham.

The Hunstanton lifeboat – Skegness lifeboat also alerted – went alongside, though the owner would not leave, said Mr Needham.

The 12-year-old and a teenage boy were allowed ashore, the youngsters brought back to

Hunstanton to be reunited with their mother, who had travelled from Snettisham where she was staying in a caravan.

Mr Needham said: "This incident was caused by the owner of the vessel going to sea without any regard to insuring he had the right equipment to safeguard his crew and vessel – utterly ridiculous."

Dave Moore, watch officer at Yarmouth Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre, said: "There were no up-to-date charts on board, emergency flares, VHF radio, lights – not even a torch, or compass.

"You should never venture out on to the water without being prepared.

"It is essential to have the basic tools for navigating safely and the safety of your crew aboard."

Last month coastguards stressed the importance of planning journeys after a stricken vessel which had given a wrong position in the Wash caused Hunstanton lifeboat to run low on fuel while looking for it.

The boat, a 26-foot Fairline Fury motor cruiser, was eventually located by an RAF helicopter called to join the search.

The couple on board did not have a marine VHF radio to call for help after they encountered difficulties, ringing emergency services using a mobile.

They were unable to give rescuers an exact position. It was three and a half hours before they were found, with rescue crews tied up for around eight hours all together.

**...and finally, members are reminded that winter storage fees are due if your boat is in the boat park on the 1st December.**