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NORFOLK BROADS – THE GOLDEN YEARS

Pictures and Memories 1920s–1950s by Philippa Miller

Edited by Peter Haining

When the Norfolk artist and writer, Philippa Miller, died in 2002, she left a number of hand-written and typed manuscripts, a substantial collection of paintings and sketches and several thousand photographs – all of which she had generated during her long life lived almost entirely in and around the Norfolk Broads. These words and pictures offered a very intimate but revealing account of Broadland from her birth in 1905 through to the immense changes to the nation and its people brought about by the Second World War.

Although 'Pippa' – as she was called by her friends – continued to record the highlights of her life in Norwich after she retired from teaching in the Sixties, it was her words and pictures of those transitional years from the end of Queen Victoria's reign to the middle of the Twentieth Century that were so invaluable in this new century when so much of the past has been swept aside or lost from memory. She had lived through a time when the Norfolk Broads were still navigated by the old black-sailed trading wherries, when windmills and watermills still turned across the largely unspoiled landscape, and tourists had not yet arrived in the huge numbers that now flock to the area every year.

Little seems to have escaped her sharp mind and keen eye, her ever-present camera and deft pencil and brush. Undeniably, she enjoyed what was truly a 'Golden Age' and captured it pain-stakingly in words and pictures.

Philippa Miller was born in Oulton Broad on 10 January 1905, the daughter of local boat builder, Frederick Miller, and his wife, Susan. Both parents were keen amateur artists and with their encouragement, Philippa began writing, painting and photographing the Norfolk Broads when she was a teenager. She taught arts and crafts at the Blyth Secondary School in Norwich from 1930 to her retirement in 1965. Two exhibitions of her work were staged in Norwich Cathedral shortly before her death in June 2006. She was 101.

Peter Haining, who died tragically just as this book was nearing completion, was a former journalist, publishing executive and writer, the author of numerous books on national and international topics that have been published worldwide and translated into a dozen languages. With his wife, Philippa, who was named after the author of this book, they compiled this book from Philippa Miller's words and pictures to form a unique tribute both to a remarkable woman and her beloved Norfolk Broads.



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A trader arriving in Yarmouth, 1926.



Lowestoft Girl Guides.



Fishing for eels.



Nestishead Dyke.



'Sunday in Lowestoft Harbour' – a pencil sketch by Philippa Miller, c.1925.



Example of a double page spread.