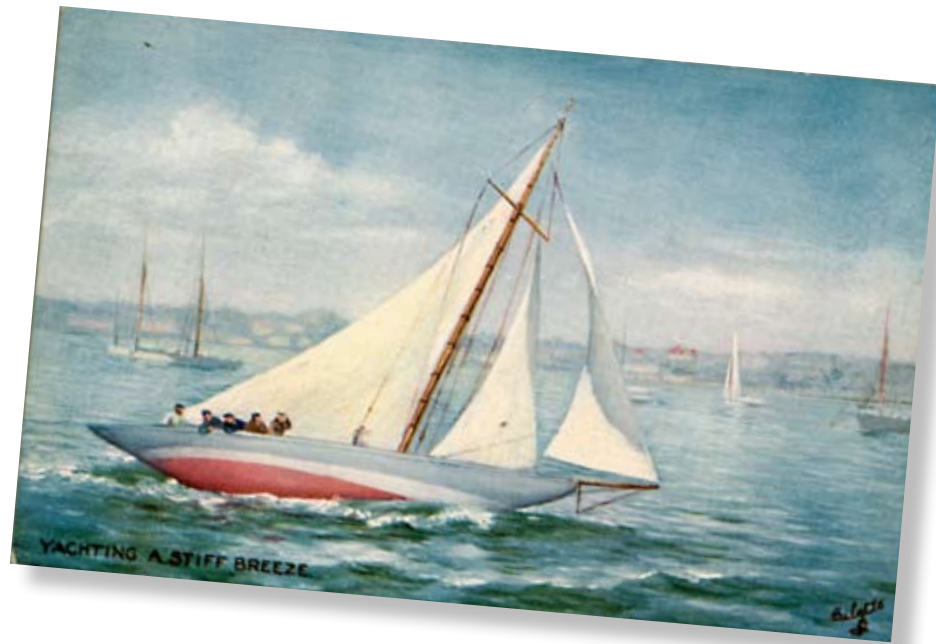


# MESSING ABOUT

THE PLEASURES, AND THE THRILLS, of getting out on the water in a yacht or a rowing boat have been appreciated for decades. Adventure stories have often been the inspiration for the generations of children who have been sent out to test their skills – but all too frequently the learning curve has been a rapid one, as lively imagination has had to come to terms with the hard reality of crewing a small boat on a cold, wet and windy day.



△ It is the 1930s and four Girl Guides pose on an old fishing boat, acting out some great adventure. The reality is that it is low tide, the boat is firmly aground and, with no sails rigged, they won't be going anywhere.



△ 'Yachting, A Stiff Breeze' is the title of this 1920s card showing a large racing yacht making the most of the wind, perhaps in the Solent. The wind must be fluky, as the yacht in the background is barely moving.



▽ Classic children's sailing, represented by a GP14 on a family holiday in 1958.



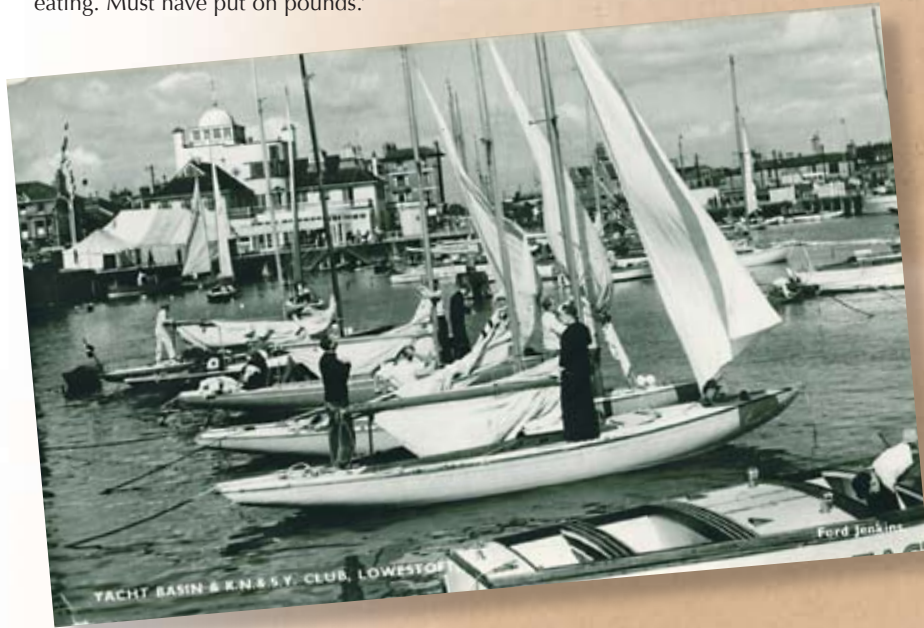
△ The caption says: 'Paul and John and self, taken by Sylvia on Hickling Broad.' The Norfolk Broads, not demanding great experience, has been popular for sailing and other boating holidays since the late 1800s.



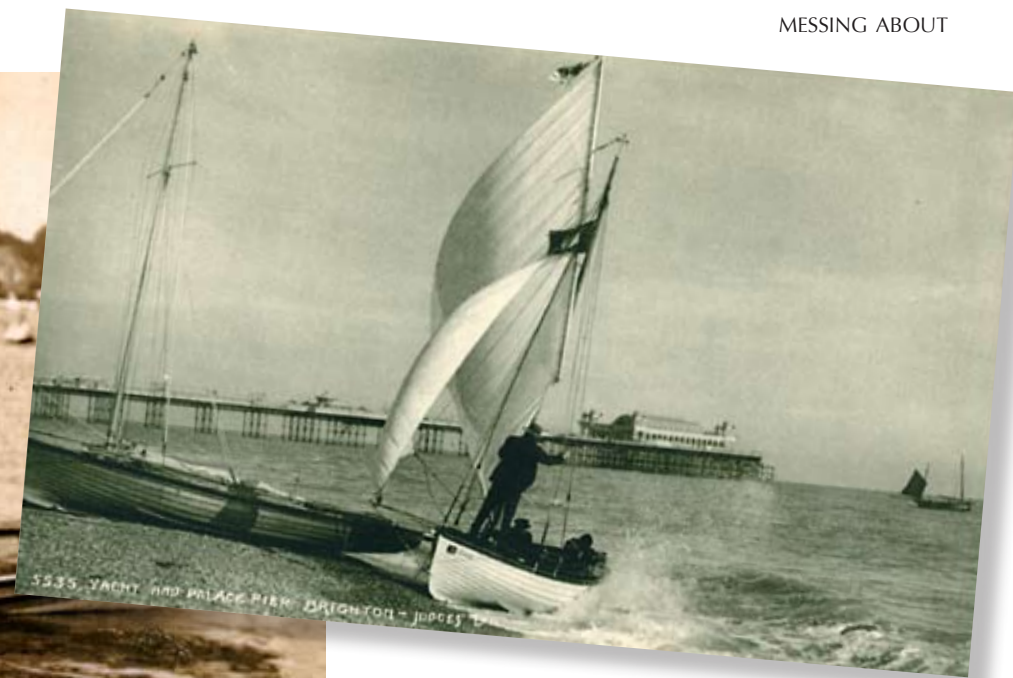
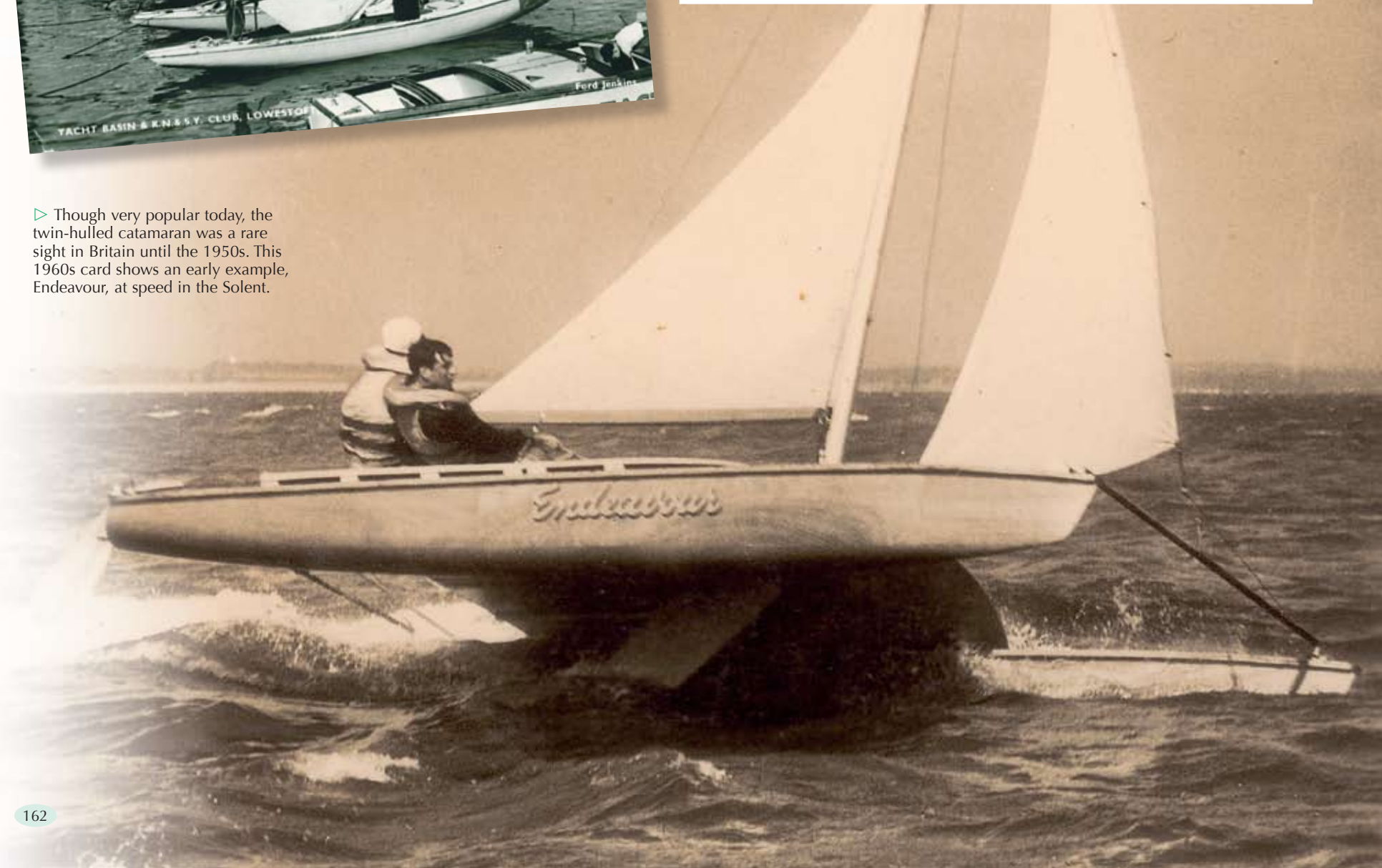
▽ Summer frocks, a breeze in the hair and the sail, a firm hand on the tiller and a patient dog – The Famous Five or Swallows and Amazons?

▽ In a scene familiar in harbours and sailing clubs all over Britain, racing yachts are readied for action. This is Lowestoft in the 1960s, but the writer of this card wasn't doing much sailing: 'Spend most of the time swimming and eating. Must have put on pounds.'

▷ Clustered in the bow of an old clinker-built fishing boat, this happy group is enjoying a trip round the bay. One of the men has a single-lens reflex camera slung round his neck, so there must have been two photographers in the party.



▷ Though very popular today, the twin-hulled catamaran was a rare sight in Britain until the 1950s. This 1960s card shows an early example, Endeavour, at speed in the Solent.



△ Sailing a boat straight onto the hard stones of Brighton beach would be risky at the best of times, but this chap has obviously managed to do it. The Palace Pier is in the background.

△ With oars casually abandoned, these three young people, dressed in a variety of 1930s styles, have seen something to make them ignore all conventional boating rules and stand up. Let's hope it didn't end in disaster.



▷ The waves are rolling onto the beach at Skegness in 1914 as six pretty girls, elegantly dressed as always in that era, wait for their rowing boat to be launched. The small boy in a striking blazer, with his shoes hung from his belt, may be helping. The message, from Maud to Lydia, in London, says: 'Do you know anyone here?'