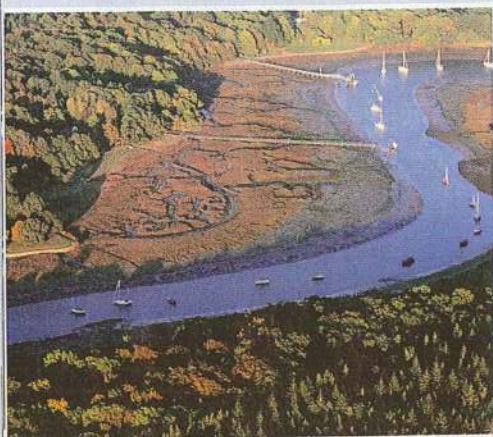


The upper reaches of the Beaulieu River



Peter Bruce takes a dinghy day-trip to explore the beautiful Beaulieu River above Buckler's Hard

Inset: looking east at Low Water from over Bailey's Hard towards Spearbed Copse and Sims Wood



The name Beaulieu is said to be a shortened version, via French, of the phrase *Bellus Locus Regis* – beautiful place of the King – possibly referring to King John. The river is still beautiful and one of the great joys is that it gets more beautiful



Moored yachts adorn the meandering beauty of the Beaulieu River

the further up you go, all the way to Timbrell's Quay at Beaulieu village. Moreover, given a spring-ish high water, there is a good 2m depth in the channel almost that far.

The wooded banks are lined with a variety of enviable houses on the eastern side, mostly with accompanying private jetties. All these houses are served by a road from the village called Dock Lane.

The leading marks at the river entrance are No2 post and Lepe House. There is only 1m over the bar at chart datum and the deepest water is when No2 post is in line with the house's west end, Lepe being quite an extensive pile.

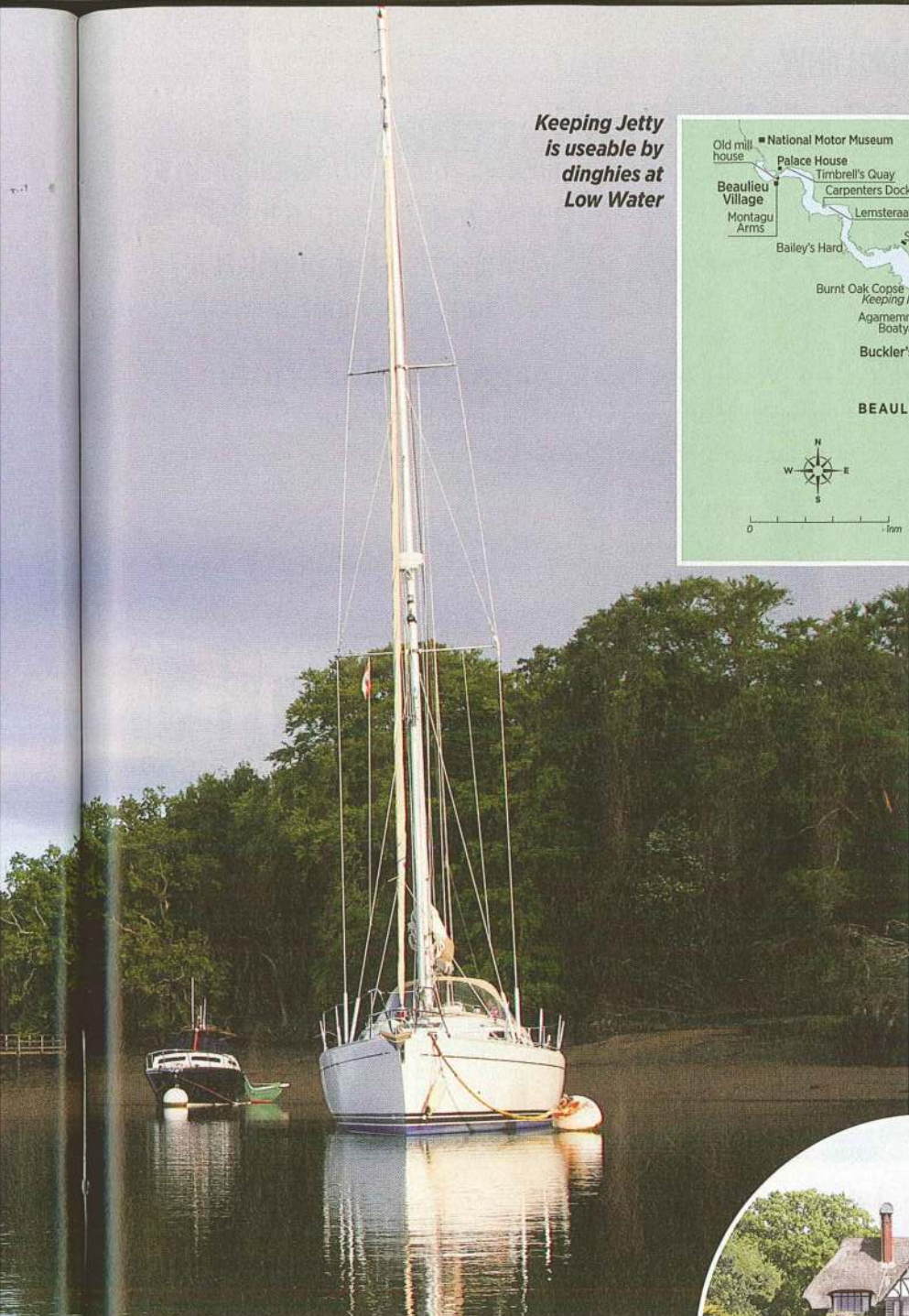
You can anchor in the first reach of the river but not further up. A licence is needed for fishing, £5 for a day or

£40 for the year, obtainable from the harbour office.

The well-frequented lower reaches of the river are both charming and interesting, but it is the river above Buckler's Hard which is quieter, more attractive, and where wildlife is more likely to be seen. After completing the first turn upriver from Buckler's Hard around Keeping Marsh so the boat goes roughly from east to west, you will see Keeping Jetty on the left. Kingfishers sometimes use the jetty handrails as a diving platform. Landing is allowed, as with Bailey's Hard further up, but not berthing. Ornithologists may be interested in a hide off the main path, just south of the landing.

Further up on the right, on the next bend, there is a rather lovely

Keeping Jetty is useable by dinghies at Low Water



Looking north-west at Burnt Oak Copse, Keeping Marsh

fishing vessel. Lemsteraaks have a remarkably shallow draught yet excellent sailing qualities and are now built with leisure use in mind. They are still keenly raced in Holland.

It is not far now to the village and as we follow the river left-handed, Palace House, home of Lord Montagu, comes into view. On the west side of the river stands the old mill house. At high water small craft can tie up at Timbrell's Quay right up by the road – but not for long. Anyone who can judge tidal heights correctly, who has



The shapely shrubs at Spearbed Copse, one of the many enviable houses on the east side of the river

the foresight to book ahead and deep enough pockets can get a delicious meal at the excellent Montagu Arms. Otherwise a saunter up the village high street is rewarding for its attractive old buildings and pretty shops – but don't forget the tide. ▲

timber-framed, south-facing house at Spearbed Copse. The three bushes in the front garden look to be crafted into the shape of fizzing sparkling perry glasses perhaps. There is a deeper pool here and, with the harbourmaster's permission (VHF Ch68 or 01590 616200), you may be able to picnic at an unoccupied mooring over the low-water period, or even overnight. Visitors' moorings are marked with a yellow 'V', but others may be used with the permission of the harbourmaster.

Continuing on, the river straightens out briefly, passing a pontoon and a dinghy park on the left at Bailey's Hard. There are also over 20 New Forest Activities Centre canoes. Buried in the trees is a private house with a building attached sporting an

industrial-sized chimney. This was once a brick and tile works using local clay. It was built in 1790 and became a shipyard in the second world war where minesweepers were built. Next comes a right-handed bend and on the right is Carpenter's Quay. In the marsh, among the reeds, you might see a nice-looking gaff-rigged sailing vessel, of distinctly Dutch appearance, with lee boards. This type of vessel is called a Lemsteraak, being based on a traditional Dutch commercial

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