

Clothes to get your claws on!

He's the new face of Norfolk: Colin the Crab – and his clothing and gift range – bring a smile to the face of anyone who loves the county's coastline:

Eliza Miller meets his creator, Susie Mason.

Colin the Crab is an eye-catching little creature, with his wry smile, lopsided eyeballs and harmless enough looking claws appearing to wave at you.

This delightful crustacean is the brainwave of Susie Mason, who started Gone Crabbing, a clothing and gift business, last spring and has watched it grow in popularity over the past year.

Susie's love of her home county of Norfolk was her inspiration – along with the fact that whenever she and her partner, Richard, are on holiday (whether in the UK or abroad) they always bring home gifts of T-shirts to the children and friends.

An obvious choice for a holiday souvenir or gift, T-shirts aren't too expensive, they are light and easy to carry and – as I can vouch only too well – you can never have too many of them (I simply refuse to count the number folded in varying shades of the rainbow in the bottom drawer of my wardrobe).

"I noticed a real gap in the market," Susie explains. "I just couldn't find a fun T-shirt that could be a lasting reminder or souvenir from a holiday spent in 'boootiful' Norfolk."

Susie's T-shirts and hoodies are made from the best quality cotton, with colourful yet simple designs that make the brand instantly

recognisable and can't help but bring a smile to your face.

The range has extended to include bone china mugs and an assortment of gift cards, and there are plans in the pipeline to offer





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LEFT: Georgie models one of the Gone Crabbing hoodies on Snettisham beach; and BELOW a T-shirt. OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM: Some of the designs of mugs available.

accessories for the clothing range, more giftware items and, of course, further designs.

"My stockists have been incredibly supportive; if it hadn't been for their endless enthusiasm, the business would not have done as well as it has. I owe them a debt of thanks as they are my real connection to the public."

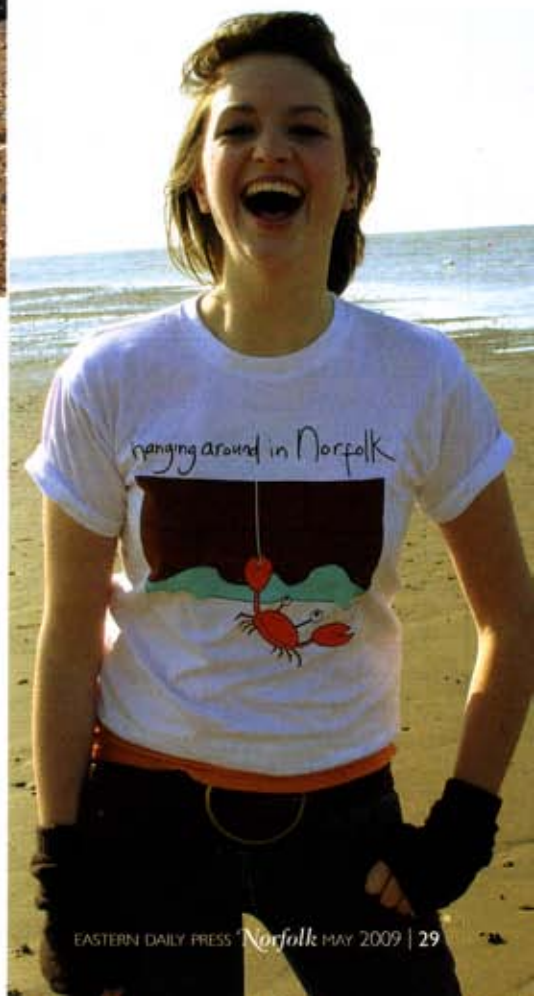
The clothing range is available for children and adults – of all sizes – from age three to four years, to a roomy XXL in the adult range (just perfect after a huge portion of fish and chips at the pub this summer!).

Susie's teenage daughter, Georgie, a pupil at Gresham's School in Holt, models for her mum and can be seen in

the publicity photographs. Her input is invaluable, along with that of her younger brother, Rory, who is also at Gresham's. Rory shows great flair for business and is apparently Susie's walking calculator.

"The children and their friends do my market research for me," Susie says. "They all love the bright colours and each has a favourite design: Rory likes 'Hanging around in Norfolk', Georgie likes 'Boootiful Norfolk', while their younger friends find 'I'm a Norfolk Nipper' highly amusing."

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Childhood holidays along the coast were the inspiration for the name of the business, and I'm sure we'll be seeing many "Colins" worn by youngsters expectantly dangling bits of string over quaysides all over the county this summer, and by many others out sailing, dog walking, playing tennis or generally gambolling around.

Keep cool in a T-shirt or wrap up in a hoodie when the sun goes in, there is something for everyone – even if you've never caught a crab!

Susie comes from a farming family in Gayton and went to school at Hethersett Old Hall and King's School in Ely.

Her family has had holiday homes in Hunstanton, Heacham and Snettisham over the years, but it was when she had children of her own that she discovered north Norfolk and fell in love with the area.

Every year the family would rent a

Susie Mason tries her hand at crabbing at Wells, with son Rory and daughter Georgie. BELOW: A selection of the Gone Crabbing postcards.

house in either Brancaster or Burnham Overy, and spend weeks of the summer sailing, speed boating and generally soaking up the unique atmosphere of this very special part of the county. "I would dread to think how many picnics I have packed up over the years," laughs Susie.

She has a great team behind her – not least Carolyn Wilson, who handles the PR and marketing, and who has extensive knowledge of the fashion industry, having worked for Jean Muir and Vivella in the past.

"Working with Susie is like being on a fast train," says Carolyn. "We usually say to each other: 'Right, no GC (Gone Crabbing) this weekend.' But it never works! How can you stop when the journey is so exciting and we have so much enthusiasm for the products?"

Having run a successful property letting company on the north Norfolk coast, Susie's entrepreneurial skills are well honed. She says that Gone Crabbing was never intended to make a high fashion statement; she simply wanted to create a range of infinitely wearable casual clothing which expressed the happiness and fun that we all feel on holiday.

Testing times mean that many families are looking closer to home for their summer break this year. Surely Colin can tempt us all to the shores of Norfolk and then, when that cosy Gone Crabbing hoodie is suddenly pulled from your drawer in the depths of winter, he'll lift your spirits and remind you of the good times you enjoyed. 🦀

For more information on products, prices, availability and stockists, visit www.gonecrabbing.co.uk or contact Gone Crabbing, 50b Brow of the Hill, Leziate, King's Lynn, PE32 1EN, 01553 630145, 07867 500065; email: info@gonecrabbing.co.uk

