

OGA ACM January 11th 2025

East Coast OGA Presidents Report

The EC OGA cannot function without the time, hard work and voluntary commitment of the EC committee who have met regularly over the past 12 months. We are fortunate and I am grateful that on the EC we have a strong committee plus additional EC members who will organise events.

Our 2024 program has been varied starting with 2 well attended winter talks firstly an evening talk by local speaker Cathy Shelbourne about Thomas Cavendish a Suffolk man, Privateer and the second Englishman to sail around the world.

In late winter on a Saturday afternoon our second talk was by Jane Stone – Harwich Pilot and Ben Grundy Harwich Tug Master who gave us a fascinating insight into the day-to-day work of safely moving some of the world's biggest container ships in and out of Harwich harbour. Winter afternoons are a popular time for events.

The National AGM in Liverpool was attended by several EC members, Clare Thomas was made an Elder Gaffer in recognition for her many years of service to the East Coast and OGA generally. A small group of EC Young Gaffers also attended the National AGM helped by a grant towards travel and accommodation from the EC committee. This grant we are looking to repeat in 2025.

Tradition is very much part of the EC and where would we be without the Burnham Dinner organised again this year by Trevor and Elaine Rawlinson.

This event was an opportunity to thank retiring long standing committee members Pete and Clare Thomas and Robert and Lorna Hill and make a presentation to them of personalised nautical paintings by Claudia Myatt.

Trevor Rawlinson an OGA member since 1985 and our longest serving committee member – he has been on the committee so long that we have no idea how long- but certainly at least 35 years. Trevor announced at the 2024 dinner that this was probably the last one he would organise and at our recent committee meeting said he would be standing down from the committee at this AGM. Trevor and Elaine have been invited as our guests

to the '*Not the Burnham Dinner*' which will be held in early March at a new location – probably West Mersea Yacht Club.

Our first sailing event the Deben Rally over the late May bank holiday weekend was well attended, with racing on all three days and the inaugural Teamac Gaffling Championships, with keenly competitive racing.

This event was supported by Woodbridge and Waldringfield Boatyards and the support boat was provided by the 5th Woodbridge Sea Scouts. We plan to run this rally on alternate years.

25 years of Swallows and Amazons was celebrated with a 3-day event which proved very popular, and the extra day will be repeated in 2025. The event attracted several out of area sailors and we plan to promote the 2025 event to other areas again next year. Gafflings were sailed by Young Gaffers with Essling 1st in class and 1st overall sailed by Will Roberts and Maddy Masters.

After a break of many years the Southwold Rally made a welcome return to the program. Our hosts the Southwold Sailing Club were celebrating their 75th anniversary. Gaffers large and small enjoyed cruising, racing and socialising over an enjoyable weekend.

July our annual East Coast race was once again held on the River Blackwater at Stone SC. Numbers were down due in part to another event across the North Sea, but the Stone SC were as usual magnificent hosts.

2024 was also a significant anniversary for our nearest OGA Area neighbours the Dutch OGA, who celebrated their 20th anniversary with another cross-country cruise. Gaffers from the East Coast, Solent and Southwest made the journey to the Netherlands to enjoy socialising, cruising, racing and 'battles' with our great gaffer friends the Dutch.

The East Coast committee wished to mark the occasion and remember the help and encouragement the late Jon Wainwright gave the Dutch Gaffers to start the Netherlands OGA area. It was decided that a half model of Deva the boat Jon sailed to the Netherlands on many occasions would be appropriate.

EC Young gaffer and shipwright Tom Curtis the current custodian of Deva who is also rebuilding her made a beautiful half model which was presented to 4 of the original founders at Durgedam during the 20th

Anniversary Rally. The half model can be used by the Dutch OGA as a perpetual trophy.

We are fortunate on the EC to have an active group of Young Gaffers some of whom once again organised another successful August Cruise. They are already planning 2025.

For 2025 we are aiming for an EC OGA event every month with our varied winter social and summer sailing program.

Communications are an essential part of the EC strategy to inform our existing membership about our activities and to increase awareness to potential new members about what the EC OGA is all about. We have a very talented Comms Team who produce professional comms. and event registration and management information throughout the year.

Our monthly East Coast Mail Chimp campaign is now being emailed to 302 members up from 294 in October. The full East Coast OGA Comms Annual Report for 2024 is included at the end of the Presidents report for those who are interested in what we do and the analytics available.

Looking to the future the OGA needs to expand its ambition beyond five- and ten-year anniversary events.

Small boats – dinghies and small trailer sailors continue to grow in popularity and EC membership growth would appear to be driven by events and particularly small boat events. In 2024 we have welcomed 30 new EC members including 5 Family Memberships (35 new members in total).

With the increasing popularity of small boats, the EC are adding a third Gaffling to the EC fleet to encourage existing and potential new members to enjoy small boat gaffing. We believe the Gaffling provides accessible fun gaffer sailing for all ages and will be a pathway to larger boats for some members.

We plan to run additional small boat events and encourage EC members to hire a Gaffling and 'raid' other OGA areas! We also anticipate the EC Young Gaffers and Young Gaffers from other areas will get together for Gaffling Team racing and other Gaffling events.

We have an opportunity and responsibility to expand the ambition of the OGA but this needs to be driven by the Areas with support from the GMC, the Gaffling is an unrealised opportunity for this organisation.

Paul Masters EC President December 2024.