



EASTCOASTER

The Newsletter of the East Coast Old Gaffers Association

August 2019 Issue 120

Forestay

As the OGA summer cruise gets underway in the Blackwater and Crouch I bring you reports of events that have already taken place. Many of these were held in the Harwich area, so moving the cruise South had not left the northern rivers abandoned.

As a salt water sailor I tend to think of the Stour as stopping at Manningtree, but it is navigable by smaller boats for some way upstream. If you are interested in visiting the non-tidal Stour you could do a lot worse than use the Stour Trust vessels, and since they are looking for volunteers you might end up making a habit of it.

Mention of Barton Broad in the previous issue reminded Bob Berk of a trip he took there years ago in *Crow*. Unexpected dangers lurk in those waters!

The East Coast Race is part of the Summer cruise and will be more fully reported in the next issue, but you will find the results below for a race with plenty of wind and fast times.

Finally I include some information about the upcoming rally in the Deben for large and small boats. This is on the website but I have copied it here. We also hope to have a final small boat event up near Aldeburgh.

I have been away for the past 3 weeks on Robinetta, and apologise for this issue being a bit late!

Happy sailing, *Alison Cable, Eastcoaster editor*



Cgynet of London. C.Stroud

In this issue

Forestay

Reports

Tollesbury

Pennyhole Bay

Swallows and Amazons

Manningtree Regatta

Articles

Stour Trust News

Crow in the Broads

East Coast Race results

Upcoming events

Backstay

A Windy Tollesbury Rally

Alison Cable

A dozen gaffers joined the Tollesbury Sailing Club's Friday Food event on 3rd May, to enjoy a meal of chicken and leek stew followed by Banoffee pie in convivial company. The talk was mostly about the weather, notably the horrible forecast for the next day's racing. With the wind expected to gust to 26 knots from a base of 18, there was doubt about the wisdom of racing.

Gaffers are a hardly lot, and despite the weather another 3 boats appeared on Saturday morning, making 10 OGA boats in the park, including *Seamew*, a Burnham Scow owned by Mark Berry, appearing at her first OGA event, and a brand new Smack boat, *Pearl*, freshly finished for this event by Pete Thomas. Other faces were more familiar, with *Fyre* and *Dirty Gerty* hoping for another face off with the Tollesbury GP14 fleet.

However at the start of the briefing time, when the question was asked "Who wants to race?" no one puts their hands up. The gusty wind was just too strong for safe racing. None the less *Tiki*, *Minnow*, and *Knot* (now owned by Melvyn Fox) made their way down to the hard, hoping to go out for a sail. *Pudding Faces* was already afloat in the marina, having been towed down from Titchmarsh Marina by *Rosie*.

Standing on the hard, trying to get the sails up before launching showed just how unmanagable the wind was. Sandy Miller had brought his kayak, hoping to take pictures of the racing from closer up. He launched, and was capsized by a wind gust within 10' of the hard. Not just racing, but all sailing was abandoned. But not rowing. Unaware of what had happened Ian Clark brought *Pudding Faces* round from the marina, found no one on the hard, and explored the Saltings under oar instead.

With racing abandoned *ELG*, *Dirty Gerty*, *Seamew*, and *Fyre* headed home. Unfortunately *ELG* managed to pick up a parking fine from Tollesbury on the way. This is being challenged. The remaining crews spent the afternoon exploring Tollesbury, while dodging hail stones and rain showers that were driven strongly by the wind.

Some of the crews returned to enjoy the evening meal of chilli and rice at the Kings Head. There was no prize giving as no racing had taken place, but the weather forecast for Sunday was much better, so maybe we could go out then?

After a Sunday breakfast of bacon, egg, and fried potato, and an in depth discussion with the Tollesbury race officials 4 smack boats, a Padstow Lugger, and 3 GP14s assembled on the start line for the OGA v Tollesbury race. The course set took best advantage of the force 4 northerly wind, and a very enjoyable race ensued. The GP14 fleet took all line honours, with *Minnow*, the first smack boat home 2 ½ minutes behind, closely followed by *Pearl* then *Willow*, with *Pudding Faces* and *Tiki* bringing up the rear.

George Rogers from Tollesbury sailing club was awarded the David Cade shield for first GP14, while Will Thomas received the Leaving's Pot (AKA the King's Head Trophy) for first Smack's Boat. Ian Clarke was awarded a pair of rowlocks for his heroic efforts on Saturday.

This was an enjoyable event despite the weather, and for the first time in its history went over the expected 2 days! Many thanks to the Tollesbury Sailing Club and the King's Head for their hospitality, and here's hoping that the weather next year will be better.



Windy weather at Tollesbury

Pennyhole Bay Race

Words by Evie Clemance, Photos Colin Stroud

The weekend started with all competitors and friends gathering at Stone Point for a barbecue on the beach. The early arrivals had a good scavenge for driftwood to use on the bonfire and even found two large slabs of suspected palm oil! The crew of *Cygnets of London* had to hitch a lift to shore after discovering their tender had mysteriously disappeared somewhere en route.

Spirits were high as everyone retired for a good night's sleep before Sunday's race.



Hester, Irene, and Witch at the start

We had an early rise for the tides on Sunday morning, with the start at 09:00. A big thank you to Colin Stroud and Mike McCarthy on *Stardrift* kindly stepping in as committee boat before venturing back up the Wallet. It was a close start with all 5 boats competing for clear air as they headed out to Pye End as the first mark. With a decent wind behind them, the tide underneath, and calm seas the boats rounded the mark in quick succession with *Irene* in the lead, and set off on a reach to Fox's. *Transcur* took full advantage from the get go on the second leg as others followed some questionable angles as they sought out the mark, pulling out into the lead with *Cygnets* hot on her heels.

As the competitors rounded Fox's ready for a beat up to Penny Hole, the wind and chop started to build. The smaller boats struggled a bit with the sea state,

and *Hester* retired, while the larger boats were able to power through. *Transcur* and *Cygnnet* enjoyed a good tussle as they got closer towards the mark, with *Cygnnet* slipping through just in front of *Transcur*. Next round were *Irene* and *Witch*, glad to turn away from the wind and back onto a reach. The breeze had been building throughout the beat enabling all competitors to fly off back to Fox's, *Transcur* storming into the lead off the wind.



Transcur and Cygnnet

Transcur and *Cygnnet* continued their close race around the course, fighting for who would lead the fleet. *Witch* and *Irene* followed on having a close race of their own, *Witch* powering through the chop where *Irene* was bobbing about like a cork. Whilst all competitors were glad to reach the final mark, rounding Pye End again and heading back towards Walton, they were faced with a beat through the chop back up to finish at No.5 (an interesting choice with the tide only an hour into the flood!).

Following a sail change for *Transcur*, *Cygnnet* managed to hold out on the final beat to be first boat home, closely followed by *Transcur* with *Irene* slogging on behind.

With a nice early finish due to the good breeze and some cracking sailing by the competitors, everyone cruised down to Titchmarsh for a shower, lunch, and a well earned rest! Dinner and prize giving were hosted in the Harbour Lights - a big thank you to the team there for putting on a lovely spread for us all, and thank you to the gaffering friends who joined us! Everyone held out for as long as possible with the conversation and drinks flowing, before giving

in to the tiredness and retiring to bed.

A great weekend of sailing and socialising, thank you to all who came along for each and every stage - we'll see you all (and more boats) next year for round 2!

A positive end - Simon of *Cygnets* received a call from the Coastguard on the following Tuesday to inform him that a small dinghy fitting the description of his tender had been picked up by a wind farm service vessel, operating on the London Array. They confirmed that it was now ready for collection at the port of Ramsgate. Simon leapt into action, liberating a trailer from his local sailing club to facilitate collection of his beloved dinghy. The two were finally reunited, and the tender arrived home safely after its big adventure.

Competitors and Results:-

1st – *Cygnets of London*

2nd - *Transcur*

3rd - *Irene*

RTD - *Witch*

RTD – *Hester*



Irene in action

Swallows and Amazons Ahoy

Julian and Alison Cable

A grand fleet of 23 small boats assembled for the annual Swallows and Amazons race on 22nd June. The weather was glorious, with an easterly force 3 that dictated a beat to the start for an anti-clockwise circumnavigation of Horsey Island. Given the perfect wind strength the race organiser decided to take the long way round Honeypot Island before heading across the Wade and home.

Many of the usual suspects were present, both boats and people, but not always in the traditional pairings. Amongst the smacks boats *Happy Days* and *Papa Stour* were absent, for different reasons. *Papa Stour*'s custodians are busy with other things while *Happy Days* had to stay at home to give the Thomas's other boats an outing! Clare's *Bilanbil* was present again, fully seaworthy this year! Pete and Wil' were sailing *Pearl* and *Willow*, both home built smacks boats. Melvyn Fox has taken on *Knot*, once the tender to Mike and Sue Feather's smack *Letitia*, when she was called *Lettuce*. Paul and Jo Masters were sailing *Ripple* and Ian Clarke was sailing *Pudding Faces*. Rory Howlett's *Neva* was as usual the boat to beat while Ellie and the kids were on *Willow*.

The newest smacks boat was *Twilight*, finished only the week before and being launched for the first time. *Twilight* is the latest edition to OGA president Alistair Randall's fleet.



Walton and Frinton Yacht Club from the water

Julian and I sailed *Tiki*, our 15' Padstow lugger as usual and other frequent participants included Kate Philips *Montmorency* and Steve Griffiths' *Guillemot*.



Looking behind Tiki in Hamford Water

With a race start at 13:30 we decided to skip lunch, having had a cooked breakfast at the yacht club. I heard that some people took sandwiches to eat while waiting for the start in the Twizzle, but finding time to eat can't have been easy. In *Tiki* we found that the tide kept carrying us away from the start line and I had to row hard to get us back to it when the start hooter sounded. We were last but one across the line.

We had a great sail down towards Stone, managing to catch up and pass two boats on the way, which felt lovely. Not so lovely when they, and Yvonne Mitchell in *Felix* who had started after us, passed us again as we went on to a beat in the narrow channel behind Honeypot Island and headed for the Wade.

There was very little water, and we sailed with the centre plate half up to scrape over the Wade itself. After our problems at the start I was not sure we would be able to sail past Titchmarch marina, but the tide had lessened and we got past it and up Foundry Reach under sail alone.

This was our first finish in three starts, and even though we came last we got a handsome trophy. This is the same one Julian got when he brought our Graduate dinghy to the event and put his foot through the rotten plywood...

The Walton and Frinton YC had laid on a barbecue for the OGA and the club

members, which went down very well while sitting in the bright warm sunshine waiting for the prize giving. This was held in the upper bar, and amusement was provided by the award of a brand new “Lucky Bastard” trophy to George Hutley, who was prevented from sailing by a broken ankle. This did mean he was available to time the boats home.

Results

1st Overall, *Nona* 1st Smack's Boat *Minnow* 1st Jewel *Spinnel*
2nd Smack's Boat *Pearl* 1st Traditional *Dabchick* 1st Boat home *Willow*

The plan for Sunday had us heading to Kirby Creek for a picnic, but in the event wind direction and a force 4 dictated a trip to Stone Point instead. Our main sail came crashing down half way along the Walton Channel but we



Smacks boats on the beach at Stone Point

repaired it quickly and reached Stone point soon after everyone else. Beaching Tiki and setting a shore anchor was a new experience for us, but we had plenty of help on hand to make sure we got it right.

Much interest was taken in a barge trying to sail in to the Walton channel. She was making significant leeway, but eventually made it safely past Stone point, and anchored. Soon after the OGA fleet set off back towards Walton. On *Tiki* we did not bother to raise the mizzen sail, and made good time on reefed main and jib, while the smacks boats were all reefed too.

Once back at the Walton and Frinton Yacht Club it was time to pack up the boats and set off home after another lovely weekend sailing. Many thanks to everyone for making this such a great annual event.

Manningtree Regatta, 20-21st July

A select group of OGA dinghies took part in the Manningtree regatta this year. Saturday's pursuit race saw *Willow*, *Papa Stour*, and *Papa Little* take part, with Rory Howlett in *Willow* performing best. Sunday's Classic Dinghy race only had the two *Papas* in it, with *Papa Stour* the smack boat being loaned to Julian and Alison Cable for the weekend. By the wonders of handicapping *Papa Stour* beat *Papa Little* (a gaff rigged wayfarer with a full racing crew of three) into second place. A great time was had by everyone who took part, and hopefully more OGA small boats will take part next year. Not that boats need to be small to visit Manningtree. Melvyn Fox brought *Hester* up to sit on the brand new yacht club pontoon for the weekend, and also enjoyed the event.



Papa Stour

photo Ellie Howlett

News from the River Stour Trust

By Kevin Taylor

If you've ever had the great pleasure of taking a trip to or from Flatford on one of the River Stour Trust's electrically powered boats, admiring the wonderful landscape, the wild flowers and tranquil river, you probably chatted to its skipper. He or she is quite unlikely to have been ex-navy or other qualified mariner, simply an ordinary volunteer specially trained by the Trust to do the task. And now we have acquired a new boat, called the *Maria Constable*, and we are looking to recruit more people to crew our river trips.

At the moment there are twenty-three skippers manning the Trust's passenger-carrying boats operating out of Dedham, Flatford and Stratford St Mary, from Easter to the end of October. There is considerable flexibility, some people like to do a couple of duties a week, while others prefer just one

or two a month. And no previous experience is necessary. Current skippers include complete novices who previously had never been in a boat, through to master mariners, with ages ranging from fifties through to those in their seventies.

I manage the of training volunteers, it's handy because I live in Dedham. Last season we trained up seven new skippers, four gents and three ladies – it's not just a man thing. And we could do with ten, or even twenty, more. Training is on a one to one basis, to start with, without any passengers. Those with boat handling experience may only need three sessions, while others might need around ten.' Each of our passenger services operate using two qualified skippers, one at the helm and one crewing or banksiding. A trainee skipper will always be accompanied by an experienced qualified skipper. So although not fully qualified, you could be on the boats within a month, acting as a mate to an experienced skipper, helping and learning all the while.

The Trust's training programme is authorised by the Inland Waterways Association, and covers man overboard training, dealing with canoes, swimmers and rowing boats, and of course boat handling. Much easier than car driving, I assure you - and you can't get lost! - but you will end up as a qualified skipper.

Some six thousand people a year enjoy the trips out of Dedham and Flatford, with a similar number at the Trusts Sudbury base. Trips from The Talbooth for Sunday lunches, and especially weddings where the couple arrive by boat, are increasingly popular. We also operate from the Dedham Boathouse and can arrange a dining and boat package. Passengers come from all over the world, while some who live locally are so entranced by the wonderful scenery, the peace of the river and the wildlife (seeing a kingfisher for the first time can be a real thrill), that they are inspired to sign up for skipper training.

But if boats are not your thing, we are also seeking more 'banksiders', an invaluable role, booking passengers for trips and, especially at Flatford, informing people about when the next boat will depart, and helping them on and off. They are very much needed and appreciated. Flatford Mill is on many a tourist's must-see list when visiting the UK, and to then find they can go from there for an idyllic trip up the river with a friendly and knowledgeable skipper and crew makes it truly memorable.

When the Stour was a busy route for goods the upkeep of the locks and sluices was a commercial necessity, but once barge traffic ceased they fell

into disrepair, and the steady flow of the river was threatened. The River Stour Trust was formed in 1968 to try and remedy the situation and keep the Stour as a navigable waterway, and last year, after much fund raising, we re-opened Stratford St Mary lock and prior to that, Flatford lock. The quiet peace of the river now is down to the River Stour Trust keeping the locks and sluices in good order. Most of our income derives from running passenger boat trips, and for that volunteer skippers and 'banksiders' are vital. Our current project is to restore Dedham lock into operation, another significant fundraising task.

We all appreciate our lovely river and its surrounds. What a better and more enjoyable way to help the River Stour Trust keep it that way? Are you interested? Then come and give it a go - just call to discuss, or drop me an email and I will arrange to take you out on the water.

Crow on the Broads

By Bob Berk

The mention of Barton Broad in the last issue of Eastcoaster brought back a flood of happy memories, and one, at the time, rather alarming one.

As a young boy I used to stay with an uncle who moored his traditional Broads yacht *Wayfarer* outside his waterside cottage at Stalham, and later I'd hire Broads yachts with friends from school. Many years, and several boats, later approaching retirement I was ready for a big project.

The result is *Crow*, a 38' yacht "inspired" by Phil Bolger's Moccasin design, and since I am a member of the OGA she is rigged with a gaff. Spirit Yachts built the strip planked Cedar plys glass and Epoxy hull and deck for me, and I farmed out the spars and various other bits, but it still took me three years to complete her. It was always intended to take her on the Broads so the main mast is stepped in a Broads type tabernacle and the unstayed mizzen mast simply lifts out.

Everything had worked out really well except for one thing, the wooden centreboard was too thick and kept jamming the case. The quick solution was a steel plate; I ordered a piece of 10mm steel plate, cut it to shape, had it galvanised and into the boat in a week.

Crow still had the steel plate in when we took her on the Norfolk Broads which in retrospect turned out to be just as well because we hit something with it.

We had been sailing on Barton Broad on a windy day, and would have had a reef in had we been at sea. After an unsuccessful attempt to tack up the river to Stalham, (*Crow*, with her 10 inch deep full length keel loses too much speed in the turns) we went storming back into the Broad. Suddenly there were two enormous bangs in quick succession causing the dyneema line which leads from the centreplate to a tackle on deck to jump off its pulley.

So what had we hit? There were stories about places going down in the area during the war but I couldn't find out anything about them.

I had more or less forgotten the incident when there was a piece in our local news about the remains of a German Dornier bomber being pulled out of the sea near Dover. With my interest revived I phoned the Norfolk and Suffolk Aviation museum. During a most interesting conversation with the proprietor I discovered I had hit a Meteor Jet, that the pilot had ejected but didn't survive and that since it had crashed during a period known as the Cold War it would have been armed. So I had given a plane loaded with explosives a huge whack with a big slab of steel.

With her plate right down *Crow* draws 6 foot, which is considerably more than any Broad's yacht, so presumably the place is too far down to bother them and that's why it has never been removed.



East Coast Race

With a NW wind blowing 4-5, and occasionally 6 at times, this year's East Coast was destined to be fast, and the big boats made the most of it, with the skipper of the smack *Kate* winning the honour of being the new area commodore.

Large Working Boats

1st *Sunbeam* 2nd *Alberta* 3rd *Charlotte Ellen*

Small Working Boats

1st *Kate* 2nd *Fanny of Cowes* 3rd *Peace*

Fast Classic Gaffers

1st *Cygnet* 2nd *Kestrel* 3rd *Crescent Moon*

Slow Classic Gaffers

1st *Robinetta* 2nd *My Quest*

Spirit of Tradition

1st *Lahloo* 2nd *Plum* 3rd *Hester*

Lightweight gaffers

1st *Irene* 2nd *Moonstone 9*

Bermudans

1st *Black Diamond* 2nd *Droleen 2* 3rd *Rhumba*

Titheridge Trophy *Hussar* **Young Helm.** *Fanny of Cowes*

DEBEN RALLY

24th - 26th August 2019

Why not join us for a leisurely Bank Holiday Weekend on the beautiful River Deben.

The plan is to anchor off The Rocks on Sunday, with a BBQ on the beach Sunday evening.

For crews arriving in the Deben on the Saturday, they might like to enjoy a pub meal at Waldringfield in The Maybush in the evening. Waldringfield boatyard have kindly offered a few moorings @£10.00 for the night and the pub can accommodate a limited number for dinner.

Whilst there is no official entry form or fee for this event, the organisers do require notice of your intention to attend. This is critical if you wish to include Waldringfield in your visit as numbers are strictly limited by available mooring space and the pub being very busy as it is Bank Holiday weekend.

Please remember to bring along your own food and drink for the beach BBQ!

Please email: lorna@hill4.co.uk to book your place.

SMALL BOAT EVENT – ALDEBURGH

Saturday 14th – Sunday 15th September 2019

A date for your diary! A Small Boat Event close to the quaint seaside town of Aldeburgh.

This is a new event, sailing on the Alde up river to Iken and back with the tide. Further details are to follow, but we will have local launching facilities and camping space for anyone who would like to stay over.

Aldeburgh is a wonderful Suffolk seaside town, with quaint shops and of course, not forgetting the famous Fish & Chip Shop!

Entry forms to follow, please keep a look out on the website.

Backstay

Putting Eastcoaster together has been its usual last minute rush, and I must apologise to those who get the print copy as this issue will be landing late on your door mats. It will also be slightly late on the website!

Julian and I have been away on *Robinetta* for the last three weeks in July, so I have pulled copy together while sailing which does not allow me to get to the printers. This is the problem when yours truly the editor wants to take part in the events reported! As ever my life is easier if people send me reports and pictures of their sailing adventures, which not need to be OGA events. I look forward to stories about your own boats new or old.

Please get in touch with me with any copy for the next issue of Eastcoaster by 20th October to alison.margaret.cable@gmail.com, or by post to Alison Cable. 146 Stortford Hall Park, Bishop's Stortford, Herts, CM23 5AP



East Coast President with the new area Commodore