



EASTCOASTER

The Newsletter of the East Coast Old Gaffers Association

May 2018 Issue 115

Lillibullero under sail



Forestay

The sailing season is upon us, and this issue contains details of much of the East Coast sailing offered by the OGA this year. We also have reports of the spring events.

The Fitting Out Supper on the barge *Victor* went well, and we had a very entertaining talk from Jimmy Lawrence about barges too. The barge rig falls under the OGA remit of promoting "Gaff, Lug, and Sprit" rigs and they are incredible vessels to see under way.

It is always lovely to hear from members with information about their sailing experiences, and recently I got a letter from Richard Bass. I have printed it in full, and hope you will enjoy his recollections and hopes for the future.

Back when I first took over as editor I was sent information about the smack yacht *Lillibullero*. It finally appears in this issue!

I hope that the members with boats have them back in the water by now, and are ready for the season. This starts at Tollesbury on the early May bank holiday for the small boats, and I hope to see you there as I am the organiser! Larger boats have to wait for the late May bank holiday when the Crouch Rally kicks off the East Coast Events.

Happy Sailing,

Alison Cable, editor Eastcoaster

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Annual Dinner at the Royal Burnham

Once again Trev and Elaine Rawlinson organised a splendid event at the Royal Burnham Yacht Club, where over 40 members sat down to enjoy a feast of roast salmon or chicken. From the personalised place settings to the final cheese and port, with the well subscribed raffle, everything went with a bang.

Somehow there seems little more to say than a huge THANK YOU for all the care and attention that went into making this regular landmark in the calendar work so well.

Fitting out Supper on Victor - 31st March

It was a small gathering in the cosy and convivial setting of the main saloon - or should we say hold - of the Sailing Barge *Victor* moored up outside the Custom House in Ipswich on Easter Saturday.

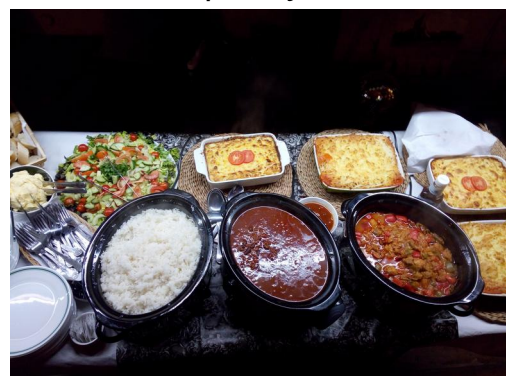
A great opportunity to catch up with East Coast Members who, though few in number, had come from as far afield as Surrey, Leicestershire and Cambridgeshire for the occasion.

Supper was an excellent hot buffet with a choice of dishes and plenty left over for second helpings. All washed down with bottled ales or plenty of wine and followed by a choice of puds - gaffer heaven!

The talk was of paint and spars and sails as befits a fitting-out supper and many a plan was no doubt hatched for the season ahead.

Members of the EC Area committee were present but if you weren't there that doesn't mean you have missed the opportunity to express your views about our calendar of events or any activities you'd be interested in if we organised them - there's always email! ecsec@oga.org.uk will reach our Area Secretary who in turn will share your views with the EC committee.

words and pictures, Sue Lewis



Jimmy Lawrence at the Nottage

Alison Cable

The annual talk at the Nottage Institute in featured one of the East Coast's most iconic figures. Jimmy Lawrence, founder of the world famous sailmaking loft in Brightlingsea, came to talk not about sailmaking, but how he got into sailing in the first place as a child.

During WW II the Hythe at Colchester was full of trading barges, which made it an endlessly fascinating destination for children. Toys were in short supply, but war materials were not; Jimmy's first barge was made by lashing together two surplus long range bomber fuel tanks to make a "toy" sailing barge that could be launched into the river. To be a proper barge it would have to carry cargo, so he and a friend loaded up the barge with wild blackberries and took them down river to the shop keeper at Rowhedge, who made jam.



By the time he left school at 15 Jimmy's only ambition was to work as a mate on a sailing barge, despite his parent's certainty that barging was a dying trade. Nothing could put him off, not the hazing of the new crew by his first skipper, which required him to climb the mast (twice) on his first day at work, or the fact that he did not get paid for that trip.

Barge skippers at the time were often old, as the war had taken all the younger men, and they viewed school leavers like Jimmy as unreliable and ignorant, but Jimmy had learnt a lot from his time at the Hythe and from slightly older friends who were also determined to be bargemen. By the time he was 17 he had been recommended to capable by his then skipper, and the company who owned the barge agreed that they would promote him to skipper at the young age of 21.

Life does not always go to plan, and his father's early death left him as the family's main bread winner. Work as a mate would not bring in enough money, and Jimmy reluctantly applied for a job with Shell, on the tankers. While waiting to hear back from them he continued on the barges, and when an accident left his skipper in hospital he ended up in charge of bringing the barge back from London to Essex. His success on this trip gave the barge owners the reassurance that he could handle the job, so at the age of 18 Jimmy realised his ambition to be a barge skipper. He never did go to work for Shell.

Nearly forty people attended the highly entertaining talk in the interesting surrounds of the Nottage. Wine, beer, and snacks were available in the interval, and there was much discussion about the barges and their ongoing use. It is pretty amazing to think that these vessels would regularly raise and lower over 60' of mast to navigate the bridges of the Thames, the Colne, and the Medway, to name only a few of the rivers that formed the freight routes of the horse drawn age.



Tool display at the Nottage Institute

Photo © Ian Clarke

Sailing recollections

Richard Bass

Although I live in Leicestershire and it's difficult for me to attend East Coast events I'm pleased to be a member as that's where I started sailing soon after the second world war in a Deben 4 tonner an uncle and my father bought in 1939. It was kept at Cardnell's yard, Maylandsea.

Those early post war years were an interesting time to be sailing. Thames barges were a common sight as there were over 100 still trading under sail. Sunderland flying boats were to be seen operating from their base at Felixstowe where there's now a container port, and the lattice towers and wire aerials of one of the radar stations, which played such an important role in the Battle of Britain were a prominent feature at Bawdsey.

I continued sailing on the East coast until the 1960s before moving to Leicestershire because of work, sadly as far from the sea as one can be!

I now have a 12 foot 8 inch lug sailed Sharpie Skiff nearing completion. I designed it myself, but based on Geoffrey Prout's V quartered sailing dinghy in his 1934 book Simple Boat-building. It would be nice to renew my acquaintance of the Walton Back-waters by bringing it to the Swallow's and Amazons weekend, but whether I'll be able to do so at my age remains to be seen.

Focus on Lillibullero

Lillibullero was built in 1932 in Boston (Lincolnshire) by A.M. (Alexander) Gostelow for Mr W.H. Johnston. A.M. Gostelow was born in 1880, and built about 28 fishing smacks and 15 yachts between 1901 and 1948, when he died.



Lillibullero on the hard

Gostelow's idea of the difference between a smack yacht and a fishing smack was very basic. The first owner, W.H. Johnston, gave a fine account of building and

fitting out *Lillibullero* in the classic book 'Building a Little Ship' (published by George Allen & Unwind Ltd, 1935). A first print copy of the book, signed by the author belongs to the ship's inventory. In this book Mr Johnston wanted to show "that a decent cruising yacht with engine and all the necessary equipment could be built and fitted out for the price of a medium-sized car". That is in the 1930's. Actually the building and fitting out of *Lillibullero* summed up to £ 298 s. 2 d. 0. Four opening ports that Johnston bought second hand in Brentford are in use on board until this day.

Lillibullero was built as the second of three sister ships. *Privateer*, the first of the three sisters, was built in 1931 for H.A. Kemlo, an Ipswich solicitor. For a long time (1966 - 1998) *Privateer* was owned by Martin Eve who recorded his adventures with *Privateer* in the book 'An Old Gaffer's Tale' (seafarer books, 1984). This book also shows a picture of *Lillibullero* moored at Pin Mill just before she was sold to Holland in 1977. *Lillibullero* and *Privateer* met again at the Shotley Point Classic Boat festival in 1995.

The third yacht of this threesome, *Eleanor*, which was slightly bigger was sailed to North America in 1978/1979 but struck a reef in the Caribbean and sank.

Lillibullero also features in 'Gaff-rigged out of Boston', a small paperback by S.R.Wright published in 1991. The extensive published information is impressive for a yacht not known for famous voyages, but reflects well on her identity as very solid and trustworthy little gaffer.

She has had seven owners up to date:

1932 - W.H. Johnston

1947 - Charles Dearlove & Jack Llewellyn

1956 - Archie & Joan Campbell

1977 - Ab Venstra

1989 - Peter Kruitwagen & Gosine Broersen

2010 - Fiona Mary Lucas

2011 - Michael and Sandra Robertson

With her first Dutch owner; Ab Venstra, who bought her on his honeymoon, she was shipwrecked on the East Coast. Her transom, several frames and planks were replaced. Ab Venstra also lowered the coach roof before he sailed her back to Holland losing some headroom but gaining a lot in looks.

In 1990/1991 she needed major maintenance. Peter Kruitwagen and Gosine Broersen replaced her stem timber, cockpit and interior. They also repaired several frames and planks. Over the years (1990-2010) Peter and Gosine replaced about 30% of her hull planking.

During the 1990's *Lillibullero* came back to England twice to visit the Shotley Classic Boat and Beer festival. She also, attended every Dutch Classic Yacht Regatta at Hellevoetsluis from 1991 to 2009.

Since returning to the East Coast she had been a very regular participant in events, never missing a Summer Cruise, and being kept in wonderful condition by Michael and Sandra Robertson.

Points Series racing

This year's races for the annual points series event are slightly different to previous years due to the plans for the summer cruise to include the East Coast Race. In this 55th Anniversary year the race is returning to its roots, and will be starting and finishing at Stone.

The races for the **large boats** that contribute to the points series are as follows.

Crouch Race 26th -7th May

East Coast Race 21st July

Pennyhole Bay Race 24th July

Maldon Regatta 22nd September

ECOGA President's race at the Pin Mill Regatta 29th September

Small boats will gain points from racing in the

Tollesbury Rally, 5-6 May

Swallow and Amazons, 16-17 June

Stour Sailing Regatta 14-15th July

East Coast Race 21st July

Woodbridge Maritime Festival 8th or 9th September

As usual one of these races can be discarded. Watch the website for more details as they become available.

Tollesbury Rally, May 5th to 6th



Smack boats being launched from Tollesbury Hard

Once again the Tollesbury Sailing Club and the Kings Head Pub have invited the Gaffers along for a weekend of sailing, racing, and exploring this unspoiled and lovely corner of maritime Essex.

Parking for camper vans is available from Saturday morning at Gibbons, the same as last year. Just look out for an electrical firm with camper vans parked out the front on the road that leads to the sailing club. It is hard to miss, and if you do, you can always be directed from the sailing club.

Registration opens at 11:00, and there will be a full race briefing at 13:00 before the race start at 14:15.

The prize giving will be at the Kings Head Pub in the heart of Tollesbury in the evening. The Kings Head are also providing Saturday evening's food. They keep some lovely beer, and there is usually a band.

The small boat race will be on Saturday afternoon, with a briefing at one and a chance to explore the area on foot on Sunday morning, and by sail on Sunday afternoon.

The Sailing Club is open to provide breakfast rolls on Sunday morning, when clues will be handed out for a geo-cache type treasure hunt. There will be another chance to sail in company in the afternoon, and the club will be open for a baked potato and fillings supper (£5 for adults) on Sunday night.

Please come along and bring any instruments you may play.

The Crouch Rally 26th to 28th May

The Crouch Rally is traditionally the first event for "Big" boats in the season, held on the River Crouch over the main Spring Bank Holiday weekend.

Trevor and Elaine always work hard to provide that little bit of extra fun and enjoyment for the Gaffer Fleet.

This year it is to be based at the Royal Burnham Yacht Club, Burnham On Crouch and they hope to arrange for some sailing on a classic RBOD.

There will be a Gaffers Lounge, a race on the Sunday, food and music.

No advance orders for meals except for breakfast Sunday and Monday, keep an eye on this page where we will update with details including how to reserve your breakfasts.

Swallows & Amazons 2018

Saturday, June 16, 2018 to Sunday, June 17, 2018

Organised annually by the East Coast OGA and kindly hosted by Walton & Frinton Yacht Club, the Swallows & Amazons weekend event will be celebrating 19 years of success this year.

The once-a-year opportunity to sail the waters of Arthur Ransome's "Secret Water" in company with true Swallows & Amazons style on-site camping is not to be missed. It's widely understood that Arthur Ransome was one of the great writers for all young sailing readers, however in professional

photography he is also regarded highly as an excellent photographer of his time. As such, this year we've included the opportunity to learn a little more about digital photography, so be sure to bring your camera (or phone!)

If you plan to arrive by yacht, you will most likely want to spend the weekend in the Walton Yacht Basin, this is managed by W&FYC and prior booking is essential.

Campervans and tents are welcome and we have the kind offering of a very nice campsite area with showers and toilet facilities for free all weekend. If you plan to bring a Campervan please let us know so that we can allocate enough room for everyone.

The following programme for the weekend is provisional and flexible and may be rearranged at any time according to weather conditions:

Friday 15 June (HW 13:40 LW 18:29 BST)

Arrival, registration and get together in the W&FYC bar

Saturday 16 June (HW 14:29 LW 20:17 BST)

Registration, launch dinghies as soon as tide allows, Swallows & Amazons Race!

Aim to get all crew ashore by 15:30 latest

Afternoon Digital Photography Masterclass

Prizegiving

Evening Meal at W&FYC

Sunday 17 June (HW 15:18 LW 21:08 BST)

Breakfast available in W&FYC followed by morning briefing

Dinghy Cruise to a location, to be decided on the day, based on weather

Retrieve Dinghies

Please register by emailing the event organisers: cliverobertson@icloud.com

Peter Elliston & Clive Robertson

The Annual East Coast Race

Saturday, July 21, 2018 to Sunday, July 22,

This year we are returning to an old haunt, Stone Sailing Club on the River Blackwater, for the race and prizegiving. We hope to have a really spectacular turnout of gaffers at Stone just as we did so many years ago.

The start of the event will be at registration at Stone Sailing Club, from 6:00pm on Friday evening. Reeds numbers, etc will be available on shore. Visiting boats can moor near the club overnight before and after the event or sail over on Saturday morning.

We will be starting and finishing at Stone S.C. We will start on the ebb as usual, around 11:00 a.m. which will give the fleet some time to get to seaward for a long course towards the Wallet and Clacton. Those wishing not to race may like to follow the fleet or possibly help out the busy organisers with 'boat spotting' at the finish. After the race there will be food, drink and of course prizegiving.

We are also hoping to run a separate race for small boats on the Saturday afternoon. Trailer sailors can launch / recover at Stone without difficulty.

In the evening there will be a prize-giving and informal dinner. Stone SC will be providing a ferry on Friday and Saturday for boats without tenders.

On Sunday, boats participating in the Summer Cruise will make their way over to Brightlingsea for the Safari Supper and the start of the Summer cruise.

The 2018 Summer Cruise

Sunday 22nd On Sunday those that have signed up for the Summer Cruise will make their way to Brightlingsea. We should be berthing together on the usual pontoons. Sunday evening we will be running a Safari supper much like last year which went very well. Some beer will be available courtesy of one of our sponsors - Mighty Oak Brewery.

Monday 23rd Sail to Walton Backwaters – Seaways Bells Passage Race. Meet up on shore at Stone Point.

Tuesday 24th Race from Walton - Pennyhole Bay Race - finishing at Shotley Marina.

Wednesday 24th Day off sailing - visit to Landguard Fort and Harwich Town.

Thursday 25th Gafferteering day - different targets different points. Finish at Pin Mill, with the evening in PMSC for food and drink.

Friday 26th Parade of sail to Ipswich Haven Marina. Boat Bake Off and pontoon party.

Saturday 27th Regatta day - sailing, rowing, sculling, flubber football. In the evening we have the use of the former Yacht Club where we will have a meal and prize giving plus more beer.

Sunday 28th Make your way home.

Venue: Brightlingsea, Rivers Colne, Blackwater & Orwell, Ipswich

Organiser: Robert Hill

Organiser email: ecsec@oga.org.uk



Backstay

This issue of Eastcoaster has been produced with some difficulty due to the editor being away cruising the Bristol Channel in the last week before publication. It has been an interesting cruise, especially with *Robinetta* not being really ready to go. The number of things going wrong and needing fixing has been very embarrassing...

I can promise no better for the next edition, since I will be at the Douarnenez festival in the essential last week. Could I therefore have any submissions by 16th July, ready for the August issue.

I look forward to receiving reports and pictures from events, sailing recollections and stories, or items about boats such as the one on *Lillibullero* in this issue.

Please send to me at alison.margaret.cable@gmail.com, or through the post to Alison Cable, 146 Stortford Hall Park, Bishop's Stortford, Herts. CM23 5AP



Robinetta moored up in Padstow