



Transcur

Many readers will have heard that Transcur, area president Peter Thomas's lovely smack, sank at her moorings on the Orwell sometime over the weekend 11th/12th July.

Transcur was built in Brightlingsea in 1889 and was comprehensively rebuilt by Peter over a number of years. The good news is that Transcur was quickly raised by a professional salvage team, then taken ashore at Pin Mill where a vast band of helpers, including many Dutch visitors, set to and stripped out and cleaned the interior. Miraculously, the engine restarted, but there is still an enormous amount of work to be done. However, Peter is confident she will be performing as usual in the August Classics Cruise.

Transcur is probably most famous for her appearance in Frank Mulville's book 'Terschelling Sands', where she was very nearly lost off the Dutch coast as a result of a navigational error. It is ironic that after 120 active years, she should succumb to something as mundane as a defective skin fitting.

Forestay

The sailing events so far this year have been well supported, with a number of new boats making their appearance. New faces are always welcome, but the arrival of new boats can sometimes make your committee scratch its collective head and spend time exploring the very ethos of the Old Gaffer movement.

Let me explain; the OGA was formed to 'encourage interest in traditional gaff rig' and to organise races for gaff rigged boats. In both, it has been outstandingly successful, and the east coast area can be particularly proud in this respect, promoting and organising two main races, which between them cater for just about every traditionally rigged boat in the area. There is the Swallows and Amazons event for open boats and the East Coast Race for workboats, cruisers and classic keelboats.

Both events have a number of categories, with prizes for each category, so that boats find themselves competing with similar craft. These sub-divisions also help to avoid races being dominated by one type of craft.

Let's look at the Swallows and Amazons; here entries are divided into

traditional gaffer

heavyweight, traditional plank-on-frame, gaff rig

new classic

recognised dinghy class, preferably traditionally rigged



Transcur

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spirit of tradition

modern lightweight ply or GRP, any 4-cornered sail

smack's boats

based on traditional smack's boat

So far so good, but what happens when, say, a Topper enters, as happened this year? It's a (very) open boat, but no way could its presence be described as encouraging interest in gaff rig. And what next, a 5-0-5? A more marginal case would be an Enterprise; gut feeling suggests that an old ply version with spruce mast would be OK as a 'new classic', but not its GRP/alloy sister, but this is hardly logical. Maybe we should allow only dinghies which comply with the Classic Bermudan criteria – that is, designed before 1960 and built of wood.

The committee's feeling is that the emphasis should continue to be on 'tradition', however that is defined, and 'hot shots' should be discouraged. So, next year, if you have any doubt regarding the eligibility of your dinghy, have a word with someone on the committee before entering.

At the other end of the scale we have the East Coast Race, full of working boats like smacks, prawners and bawleys, and classic yachts, mainly pre-war but some more modern, plus a sprinkling of open-cockpit keelboats. Construction material is no barrier to entry, we even have a prize for the first ferro-cement craft. All you need is a mainsail with more than three corners. We have glass hulls, carbon spars, anything goes..... or does it?

This year the system was caught out by a boat which ticked all the right boxes – traditional rig, wooden hull – but it was in fact a dinghy. It was

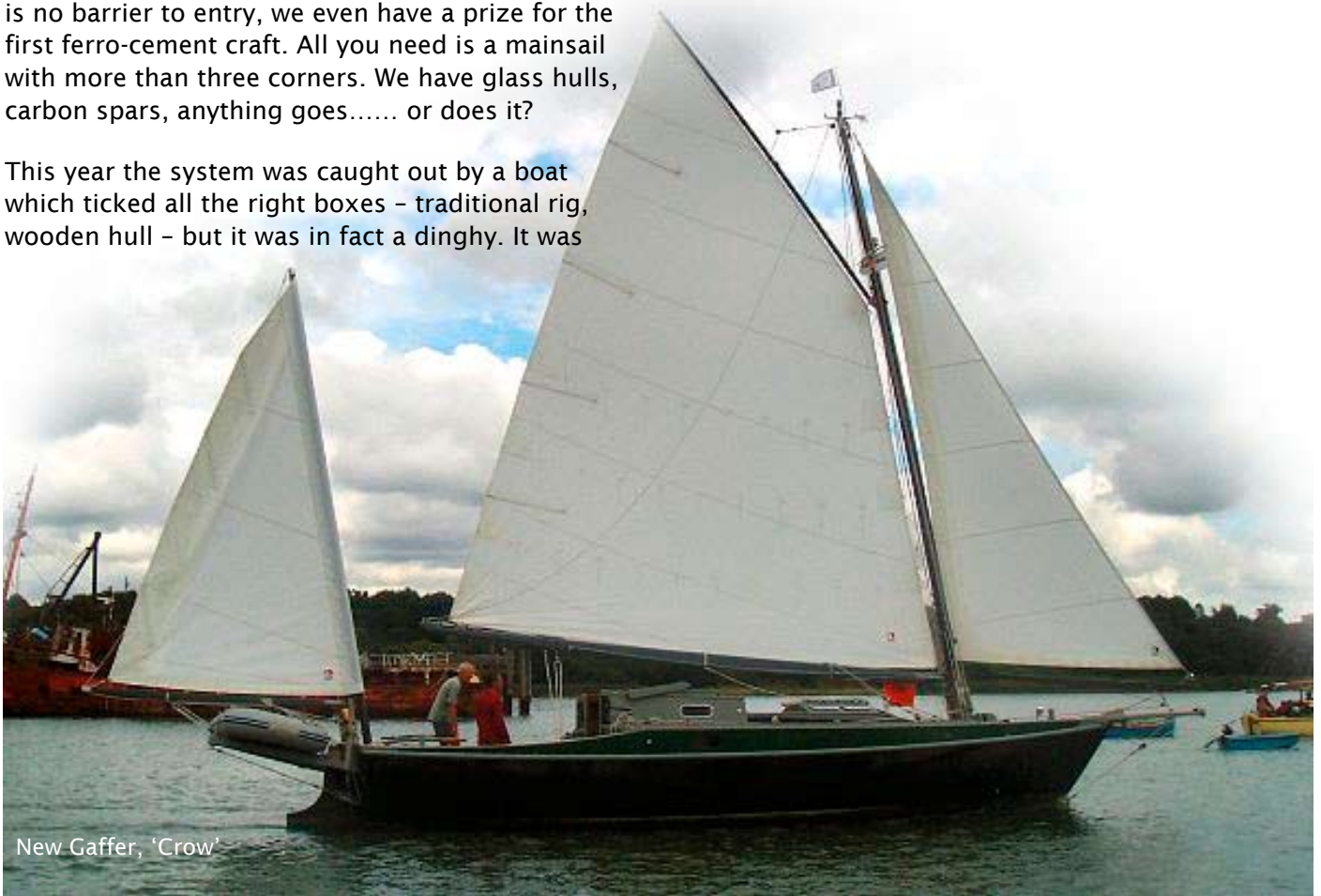


In the Swallows and Amazons Tradition

light, fast and very well sailed and caused a few red faces in the rest of the fleet. We wish to encourage more entries to our events, but don't want to dilute the vision that the founder members had, when the Association was formed so, again, if you think your entry might not be eligible, ask the committee.

Let me know what you think.

Bernard Patrick



New Gaffer, 'Crow'

Reports of Events

Fambridge Rally

If two events can make a trend, I can confidently predict that future gaffer events will have gorgeous weather for most of the time, with a little of the horrid stuff included to maintain a sense of perspective. We had warm sunshine for the two May bank holiday rallies with a character forming breeze for the racing at the start of the month, and more of the same reserved for the final bank holiday Monday. [Note that this was written in June – the met office have had a rethink since then].

The forecast for what used to be called Whitsun on May 23rd/25th was unbelievably good; light winds, hot sun – up to 23deg inland – but with a threat of thunderstorms later on Monday.

In spite of the rival attraction of the Mistley Quay Protest rally, ten boats arrived at the Fambridge pontoon in time for supper at the marina bistro; these included two prawners, William and Maryll – the latter single handed by Julie from West Mersea (Keith came by car with the beer) – and Victoria, the 1898 Colne police boat with delighted new co-custodians, Sue and Howard. Victoria arrived with a wooden dinghy in tow, appropriately called Albert; according to Sue 'Albert usually follows dutifully behind at a respectful distance, but is occasionally allowed on top, much to Victoria's surprise'.

Sunday dawned sunny and warm and, with a full cooked breakfast provided by the Fambridge YC inside them, crews were slow to start the drift up to the head of navigation and the eagerly awaited lunch at Battlesbridge Hall. Navigation isn't that tricky, there's enough water but you have to know where it is, as Joni Mitchell sang 'you don't know what you've got 'till it's gone'. Alice and Florrie was first up, ploughing a furrow through the mud for most of the way; William got up, wasn't happy and did the seamanlike thing and dropped down river a mile to anchor up and proceed by dinghy. The Janty men were next, closely followed by Molly Cobbler, Victoria and Ella Rose, but all were surprised to see a vast steel live-aboard barge being warped away from the quay and filling all the available space. Janty managed to get a rope onto the south shore and warp herself in, Molly did a handbrake turn by dropping her plate in the mud, while the others just tried to keep out of the way. And just when everyone thought the quay would be nice and clear for mooring, the behemoth's skipper announced he would be back in an hour! All very entertaining for



Victoria

the general public.

Eventually all were moored up against a tiny jetty on the south bank, with lines to the bridge; all that is, except Maryll who got her tender painter around her prop when avoiding the barge and retired back to Fambridge.

After all the excitement, it was pleasant to relax with a cool drink in the grounds of Roy Hart's lovely home while he and his 'butler' prepared the



Heavy traffic at Battlesbridge

magnificent barbecue. Roy is a very enthusiastic gaffer, racing and cruising 'Greensleeves' widely and we are very grateful for the practical help he gives to the Association.

But the water doesn't linger long at Battlesbridge and soon the fleet was underway on the first of the ebb; that is, as soon as the barge had returned and warped itself back into its quayside mooring. The trip back was uneventful, maybe because everyone was mellow and relaxed, full of Roy's food and wine. What a memorable day!

Thanks, as always, to organiser Trevor Rawlinson and the Fambridge YC who never seem to mind the gaffers taking over their club – and of course to Roy for his splendid hospitality.

Oostende vor Anker (Ostend at Anchor)

Escalating from 20 boats and 35,000 visitors in 2000, to over 150 boats and an estimated 300,000 visitors this year, the Ostend at Anchor Festival is a runaway success. Boat registrations had to be restricted this year due to the level of interest, and no wonder: the hospitality is excellent and the experience is a very special one.

What the visiting public gets is a spectacular selection of different old and old style boats to view, a varied programme of musical entertainment on two different stages, wandering minstrels, demonstrations of traditional crafts, all free of charge – and plenty of market stalls for those with money to spend. Participating crews enjoy all the same opportunities, with the added benefit of free mooring (for up to 2 weeks), free shower facilities, generous crew receptions, crew 'happy hour' every night, and to cap it all an invitation on the final morning to sail on a 3-masted tall ship with breakfast included!

East Coast Old Gaffers to take up this unmissable opportunity included Bonify, Elfreda and Flamingo who all sailed from the Orwell on Wednesday night (28th May), in the aftermath of some strong winds, arriving just in time for the start on Thursday 29th. Already there were Rhumba and a contingent from Walton including Witch, the Peter Duck Golden Eye, and Cirrus.

Dutch Salmon Scows

Regular participants in this festival are a contingent of Dutch Salmon Scows (Zalmschouw) made of steel. Some are original late 19th and early 20th century working boats, just over 7 metres, of riveted construction, and some are more modern welded replicas. A system of registration numbers, by village, was used to identify the boats. On the pontoon astern of Bonify was one of the old ones: dating from 1898, she has remained in the same family, who made a living fishing from her in what are now inland waterways until the Second World War. You won't see many salmon in those areas now! The nets on display are eel nets – one about 50 years old, one about 25 years old and one new one (although it is illegal to use them now), Presumably salmon was seasonal...

More recently this boat has been used for family holidays – with parents and 5 young children all joining in – the young ones sleeping in tents ashore beyond the dyke!

Ostend at Anchor is one of those on-the-water events that the continentals do so well; no racing or trundling from place to place, just lots of interesting boats and interesting folk. Free mooring, cheap food and drink, lots of music and markets and well organised events. It has become so popular that this year the entry had to be



Crew's Happy Hour

1. Beware of young visitors. When showing children round your boat take care NOT to show them the heads as they are guaranteed to instantly require a "pipi". Likewise your fruit bowl will be irresistible, as will wind-up torches and mobile phones. (None of this will be a problem if you are rafted 4 out as their parents won't let them get that far from the perceived safety of the pontoon, and the risk is also much reduced if you have no guard rail, for similar reasons)
2. Beware of your mates at Crew Happy Hour. The mates who might try to embarrass you by stocking up on the buy-one-get-one-free beer for themselves but placing it all on the table in front of you, and conversely mates who, put in that embarrassing position, might start giving your beers away to all and sundry.
3. After midnight watch out for Obelix the Exorcist – a faith healer from a large Breton fishing smack, wearing a plaited blond wig and known to make grown men cry.
4. Beware of Belgian beer: the excellent brew served at the Mayor's reception was 8.5% (at 11am!) but they do come even stronger than that.
5. Lastly, whatever you do, do not under any circumstances attempt to try all the beers available in the Bar of 400 Beer.

restricted. Seven boats made it from the east coast OGA; and can't wait to go back for next year's event.

Sue Lewis; Bonify.

Swallows and Amazons June 6/7th

The East Coast Old Gaffers premier event for open boats took place at its traditional venue, the Walton Backwaters, a beautiful sheltered area of water and the setting of some of Arthur Ransome's novels.

This was the 10th Anniversary Swallows and Amazons weekend and it went spectacularly well. There was an excellent turn-out as usual, with over 36 boats on the start line for Saturday morning's 'round the island' race. Most participants arrived on Friday evening and got themselves installed at the camp site. There were six cruisers and their tenders moored up in the Walton and Frinton YC pond by lunchtime Friday – Ariel, Ellen, Transcur, Charity, Ragged Robin and Sea Otter. Nancy Blackett spent the weekend alongside the quay outside the club house and welcomed all visitors, especially Arthur Ransome fans, who remembered she starred as 'Goblin' in 'We Didn't Mean To Go To Sea'.

It needed to be an early start on Saturday morning to catch the tide so that the race could finish near high water at the Walton and Frinton Yacht Club. Unfortunately the wind was rather strong and so a shorter course was set which took us from the start line to the causeway on the Wade, back down the Twizzle, round a convenient turning mark at Honey Pot Island then back to the Club.

The start was quite interesting, as the line was narrow and there were a lot of boats! All sorts of craft were racing, from Mirrors and traditional Smacks Boats, to an Optimist and of course a few one-off specials, including a 12 square metre Sharpie! Fortunately no one was over the line when the gun went and the fleet took off on a fast reach towards the Wade. Many



Traditional dinghy from West Mersea



12 Sq M Sharpie



Congestion at the mark

boats took the precaution to reef before the race, but there were a few out there under full sail. Joy of London, the Winkle Brig, quickly established herself at the front, powering along under full sail. The beat back to the junction of Foundry Creek and the Twizzle split the fleet up and there were a few stragglers, but the fleet bunched up as they rounded the mark on the Wade, the smaller boats giving chase. First boat home was Joy, who had pulled out a considerable lead, followed by the rest of the fleet coming home in a steady stream. Melisande was second home, closely followed by Mantra. Sugar Scoop was the first Smacks Boat out of the 11 that were racing.

In the afternoon, children of all ages built their paper boats which were raced across the Pond. There were 21 entries, including 'Titanic' which, with commendable historical accuracy, sank on its maiden voyage! Prizes were awarded for design as well as speed, first across the line being Rob Crossley's 'Blackett', followed by 'Red Robin' and 'Seidon'. Sophie Blackburn is to be congratulated on organising a very enjoyable event.

The traditional evening meal at the yacht club was a sell-out, and enjoyed by all. Then the Old Gaffers music session started.

After Saturday's brilliant weather, Sunday morning opened with solid rain and very strong winds, so regrettably the sail to Stone Point, crab racing and picnic had to be abandoned – but the crabs were grateful

The Walton and Frinton Yacht Club hosted the event so well yet again, and pulled out all the stop for us, nothing seemed too much trouble. Thanks also to the campsite providers, and all the organising team of Old Gaffers.

Prizewinners

'Traditional Gaffer' class

1st – Orca, 2nd – Melisande, 3rd – Julitta

'New Classic' class

1st (and 1st Overall) – Joy of London, 2nd – Voom, 3rd – Tide Race

'Spirit of Tradition' class

1st – Sugar Scoop, 2nd – Mantra, 3rd – Ruby Ann

'Smacks Boat' class

1st – Oppi, 2nd – Willow, 3rd – Cramp



2009 East Coast Race

This year's East Coast Race, the premier race for gaffers in the area, was held on Sat 13th June, a not-so-lucky day for the race officer who had to decide whether to send the fleet on the traditional long course out to the Spitway and risk half of them not getting back inside the time limit if the sea breeze failed to materialise, or play safe and set an up-river, around-the-buoys course. Discretion prevailed and the 37 starters set off from the Bateman's Tower start line off Brightlingsea, beating into a gentle SW'ly, which was soon overwhelmed by the emerging SE'ly sea breeze, but not before forming extensive holes in the wind into which the whole fleet fell sooner or later. Everyone rounded the Thirslet mark eventually, only to meet the advancing sea breeze on the way back, meaning yet more windward work to the finish.

In spite of these tribulations, 34 boats finished, with the smack Maria awarded the Tom Bolton Cup for line honours. First on corrected time and winner of the EC Old Gaffers trophy was the 1872 Itchen Ferry Fanny of Cowes, with Kestrel (1881) second and the relatively young smack Primrose (1892) finishing third. It was a day for the old-timers, the first ten boats across the line were pre the first world war and only four boats of the first 16 on corrected time were built after WW II; you have to agree that the OGA and the 'smackies' are helping preserve the country's maritime heritage, not only rebuilding these classics, but racing them too.

But, before the gaffers get too complacent, it's worth noticing that, had the eight bermudans

entries been competing in the same race, the first boat across the line by a mile would have been Barry Edwards' Random and all four bermudan finishers would have made the top seven on corrected time; even bermudan class supremo Mike McCarthy's fourth place Elfreda, which reportedly spent some time ploughing the foreshore.

But the East Coast Race weekend is not just about racing; the activities began on the Friday when over fifty hungry gaffers descended on Packing Shed Island at West Mersea for the traditional sea food lunch, before sailing on to Brightlingsea to be efficiently berthed by the harbour master and his staff and then registering at the palatial race office, courtesy of sponsors Hampstead Homes.

On race day, there was free beer for thirsty crews after the event and then prize-giving, before the usual celebratory evening meal in the Colne Yacht Club. This proved immensely popular, in fact there were more diners than seats. Music this year was provided by Phoenix Revival trad jazz band.

On Sunday morning we had something completely different - rowing races on the municipal boating lake; half a dozen boats were made available by



Maria, first to finish



Two modern gaffers, Constance and Ella

doubles races were held. Peter Collyer-Smith triumphed in the men's, while Yvonne Mitchell from the Kent area won the ladies and mixed races.

After a suitable lie-down, the afternoon's traditional parade of sail up to Wivenhoe took place. The weather was absolutely perfect, hot sun and enough breeze to keep boats moving; it was a beat, of course, and only half tide, so several keels found the mud, if only temporarily. The usual welcome awaited the fleet at Wivenhoe SC - a juicy hog roast, followed by a cholesterol challenging array of home-made cakes - and they didn't run out of beer this time. Well done WSC!

So ended a memorable 2009 East Coast Race weekend; made possible by the untiring efforts of organiser Richard Giles and his band of helpers. Here's to next year.
Bernard Patrick



Bermudan class winner Random

the operators - the 4th Brightlingsea Scouts, in return for our sponsoring them on Pioneer for the East Coast race - although that cost was met by a donation from the local Council. [I tell you, the behind-the-scenes wheeling and dealing at Brightlingsea make insider trading look like child's play. Ed.] and a series of men's, ladies and mixed



The start

ECR Results; Gaff

Boat name	class	Year	TCF	Corrected Time	Final Position
FANNY OF COWES	2	1872	0.896	264.17	1
KESTREL	2	1881	0.949	272.63	2
PRIMROSE	1	1892	1.030	276.54	3
WABI	2		0.840	278.88	4
LETTY MAY	2	1976	0.870	280.40	5
CHARM	2	1927	0.948	282.89	6
ARIEL	2	1925	0.938	285.53	7
HARRIET BLANCHE	1	1909	1.045	288.84	8
MAYFLY	2	1912	1.006	290.95	9
PEACE	1	1910	1.040	292.21	10
MARY	1	1899	1.001	292.41	11
TRANSCUR	1	1889	1.000	293.55	12
VICTORIA	2	1900	0.848	293.58	13
KELPIE 2	2	1902	0.939	301.78	14
MOLLY COBBLER	2	2000	0.842	302.19	15
SALTAIR	2	1895	0.883	303.38	16
WILLIAM	2	1992	0.925	304.91	17
REVERIE M			0.889	305.73	18
CHITTABOB IV	2	1912	1.054	307.29	19
REVERIE	2	1974	0.902	310.14	20
LUCY	2		0.905	312.04	21
PLUM	2	1990	0.899	314.28	22
MARIA	1		1.189	319.24	23
GWENILI	2		1.052	326.69	24
MOLE	2		0.846	328.28	25
SUNBEAM	1	1881	1.186	347.16	26
CONSTANCE	2		0.897	352.93	27
ELLEN	2		0.888	356.98	28
QUIZ	2	1872	0.999	371.04	29
ODESSA	2	1990	0.826	371.70	30
ALICE & FLORRIE	1	1905	0.910	372.42	31
GROMIT	1	1997	0.975	379.99	32
TOUCHSTONE	1	1982	1.122	382.15	33
EMPRESS	1	1905	0.981	383.60	34
MERMAID	1	1904	1.092	394.89	35
ELLA ROSE	2	1989	0.914	438.73	36

AVOLA			0.971	DNS
ELLATU	2	1974	1.139	DNS
LADYBIRD	2	2002	0.813	DNS
MARTHA KATHLEEN	1	1977	1.000	DNF
MOONSTONE VIII	2	1982	0.840	DNS
PIONEER		1889	1.219	DNF
ROBINETTA			0.950	DNS
VIVID			0.976	DNF
WITCH			0.942	DNS

Bermudan

RANDOM		0.943	223.02	1
MAID OF TESA		0.914	250.62	2
QUINTET		0.970	267.24	3
ELFREDA		0.888	286.65	4
NANCY BLACKET		0.969		DNF
OWENDO		0.914		DNF
QUIET DAYS		0.827		DNS
WOODLARK		0.879		DNF

Royal Hospital School Rally

The forecast of pleasantly warm and dry weather – and no gales – persuaded thirty boats to attend the Royal Hospital School Rally at Holbrook on the Stour, on the weekend of June 19th–21st. Many arrived on the Friday evening to pick up a mooring at Wrabness, where they were met by organisers Mike Robertson and Wendy and Phil Wetherill. After an early start on Saturday morning, most of the boats motored across the river to anchor in Holbrook Bay, where crews were ferried into the creek in RIBs, inflatables and dinghies and then made the pleasant walk up to the school.

After a breakfast in the impressive panelled Dining Hall, under the severe gaze of the many portraits of the school's alumni, (come now, Robertson junior, eat up your crusts!), everyone enjoyed a brief tour of the school's Design and Technology block and admired the many pieces of students' art work on display, followed by a visit to the school's new multi-million pound Music Centre. But time and tide etc. and all too soon it was time to walk back to the creek and a brief ceremony, where local ex-harbour master Peter Page was presented with an engraved glass as a thank-you for looking after all our goods and chattels while we were at the school. Andy Woollard, the school's ITC Director, was also presented with a glass and a 2009 OGA flag as a thank-you for their hospitality.

After lunch back on board, it was start time for the Trafalgar Race. In view of the light winds the shorter course to Shotley and back was agreed on, and this proved to be the correct decision. An hour after the cruiser start, the Class III and small boats race got under way, with the school's four Cornish Shrimpers making the line with literally minutes to spare. Your scribe was persuaded to enter his open boat in this race – the first time, in fact, that he had ever taken part in an OGA race.

Time never stands still at this event, and no sooner had the race finished than the barbecue was fired up. Eventually 79 participants were fed (including the crews of the school's Shrimpers) with burgers, sausages, side salads etc. Then it was prize-giving on the beach, and soon it was time for the Holbrook boats to make their way home on the new flood.

So all that remains to be said is "Book early for the 6th annual Royal Hospital School Rally in 2010". An excellent weekend, thanks to the many people who helped with the organisation.

Mike Robertson



Start of the cruiser class

Southwold 2009

Beer by the Coast

The recipe for the success of this weekend event was this: Take 30+ Old Gaffers from 11 visiting boats, give them a passage race on Friday with a good long course (50 miles for those from the Colne), send them round the cans a few times in full view of the Pier on Saturday, with silverware and beer for prizes, in both cases adding a good dollop of fresh breeze. Then feed them a generous tasty plateful of chilli and let them drink the Sailing Club dry of Adnams Bitter before Mr Adnams has even presented the prizes. By Sunday they will be delighted to learn about brewing the Adnams way and marinade themselves gently in no fewer than 7 different bottled beers.

Then take them for Fish'n Chips on the Pier, give them free time to wander (or continue to marinade), walk them to Walberswick for a pub supper and pour them into bed early. Add generous quantities of sunshine throughout the process and there you have it – a recipe for the perfect Old Gaffers event!

Oh.... apart from the unexpected ingredient introduced at 4.30am Monday as the nine remaining boats prepared to depart. Picked up on Channel 16 by the vigilant Robinetta, already heading out of the harbour: "Securité, Securité, Securité! Gale Warning for sea areas Thames and Dover: Gale Force 8, expected soon". OK guys, turn round and back to bed. But everyone did get back – eventually.

Friday: Passage Race and Secret Barbecue

Random and Charm chose to arrive on Thursday even though it meant motoring into a head wind - but the latter had beer-related organiser responsibilities. It was not a race-winning tactic as it turned out, as Friday brought a fair S/SE 3-4. The earliest starter was Ladybird who left Woolverstone at 6am; the longest passage was by Flamingo from Wivenhoe, though Gwenili came almost as far, from Brightlingsea. Also leaving at the top of the tide (around 09.45) were the Orwell contingent: Robinetta, Victoria, Transcur and Gromit. From the Deben came Quintet and Patient Griselda. Not a lot to do on the way but sunbathe and ponder the mysteries of the Secret Southwold Barbecue – organised but, oops, not communicated! Lorna more than made up for this oversight by some hasty text messages and last minute shopping.

The Colne Brigade took 1st in Gaffs (Gwenili, with Gromit second) and also 1st in Bermudans (Flamingo).

Saturday: Race Day with Runaway Sausage

Racing marks at Southwold are establishing a tradition



Flamingo and Charm

of unorthodoxy – one year it was a virtual poached egg miles offshore that you couldn't see until you had sailed over it – 2009 was the year of the runaway orange sausage. A splendidly visible "proper" racing mark which however hadn't been trained sufficiently, or briefed adequately, as it wandered off towards Lowestoft half way through the Sole Bay Race. The very capable Harbour Master Colin, our Race Officer for the day, was very reassuring as he retrieved the errant mark and motored it round the fleet authorising boats to "make your turn now, we'll allow for it in the results". How these results were calculated remains a mystery – perhaps it's better that way!

Gaffers

1st Charm, 2nd Gwenili, 3rd Victoria

Bermudans

1st Flamingo, 2nd Random 3rd Quintet

Race 2 was for the Nancy Oldfield trophy: a shorter course and a stiffer breeze. Some barging on the start line and a few tangles around marks but at least the marks all stayed on station for the duration.

Gaffers

1st Victoria, 2nd Charm, 3rd Gwenili

Bermudans

1st Flamingo, 2nd Quintet, 3rd Random

Some local boats including Winkle and Peter in his Drascombe Lugger Pippin joined the 11 visiting boats. Altogether a fine sight for spectators on the Pier.

Sunday: Southwold Day Beer, glorious beer

Adnams were generous again in their sponsorship of the weekend's event: not only a bottle of 6.7% Innovation for every crew member and some liquid prizes presented by Jonathan Adnams in person, but also a 50% discount on the price of the Brewery Tour. A big thank you to Jonathan for continuing to support the event and for giving up his own time to come and see us.

Another big thank you to John, the long-suffering Adnams engineer who took 2 tours of thirsty gaffers round the very impressive new energy-efficient brew house with great good humour and lots of interesting anecdotes. The informal personal nature of the tour was much appreciated and compared very favourably with experiences at other breweries. Those reading this who missed the tour and would like to know why Adnams' latest special edition beer has been brewed entirely by women on the staff, how the marketing people lost the battle to launch a beer in clear bottles, or why Tesco chose Adnams above all others to produce the UK's first carbon neutral beer "East Green" for them, will have to come along next year and find out for themselves, as those present enjoyed the beer tasting afterwards so much they have forgotten the answers.

Bash the Banker

Thence, via an optional quick round of Pitch'n Putt, to the Pier for Fish'n Chips in the genteel and rather un-Gafferish surroundings of the upstairs Tea room/Ballroom. Steven Bourne, owner of the Pier, gave us some background and explained his intention of retaining as much of the Olde Worlde charm of the Pier as possible. Tim Hunkin designed the Pier's famous water clock and some of the quirky games: one of his most up-to-date being the very topical "Bash the Banker". No prizes for guessing that it is always the banker who comes out on top!



Robinetta entering Southwold

Thanks

Very deserving of our sincere thanks is Southwold Sailing Club. We were offered every hospitality, from use of the well-equipped kitchen (thank you Carol - we hope we put everything back in the right place) and the barbecue, to the excellent dinner on Saturday and the bar (very good value), and of course the use of the shower and toilet facilities all weekend. Thanks to Colin the Harbour Master who doubled as Race Officer, and his colleagues.

And finally well done Lorna Hill for bringing it all together and making it happen. John will be stocking up on beer in the Sailing Club next time, so we'll need a good turnout to drink them dry in 2010.



Remember, if you can't spare the time to sail there, you can always come by car and join in the action on the Sunday.

Dutch Invasion

Every two years the Dutch classic yacht association, VKSJ, organise a regatta on their inland waters, centred around Hellevoetsluis and a number of British craft make the trip across to join in the fun by taking part in the North Sea Race from Harwich. This year Sue Lewis thought it would be a nice reciprocal touch to invite the Dutch area OGA

across for week's cruise on 'our' east coast, before racing back home with the British fleet. About a dozen of their boats came over and were joined by a crowd of locals who arrived by sea and land; it was a great pity that the weather conspired to limit their cruise to the Orwell and Stour, but they managed to fit in a barbecue at Wrabness and visits to Pin Mill and Levington. Their obvious enthusiasm for our area made me realise just how fortunate we are in having such an excellent cruising ground on our doorstep. The weather forced a postponement of the North Sea Race, but this meant the visitors were able to watch the Pin Mill barge match,

held in strong winds – which they thought was 'awesome'. In all, it was a great occasion, with much fraternising and boat visiting and let's hope it can be repeated in two year's time.

Future Events

August Classics Cruise

This year, the Classics Cruise runs from Aug 22nd to 31st and once again starts with a self-timed passage race to Ipswich dock, where you will be directed to a berth in the Ipswich Haven Marina – that's the one on the port side after you've transited the lock; call them first on ch. 80. All the gaffers and classics will be berthed together if possible, close to the marina office; organiser Peter Thomas and his band will be on hand to register your entry and give out goody-bags and Reeds numbers. On Saturday evening, if we're very polite and remember to wipe our feet, we may be invited for drinks and nibbles at the OGA president's waterside penthouse.

Sunday is regatta day, with rowing races, inflatable dinghy sailing, flubber football, crabbing etc. and a visit to the Haven YC for a hog roast in the evening.

Continuing the relaxed theme, on Monday the fleet cruises to Woodbridge on the Deben and berths

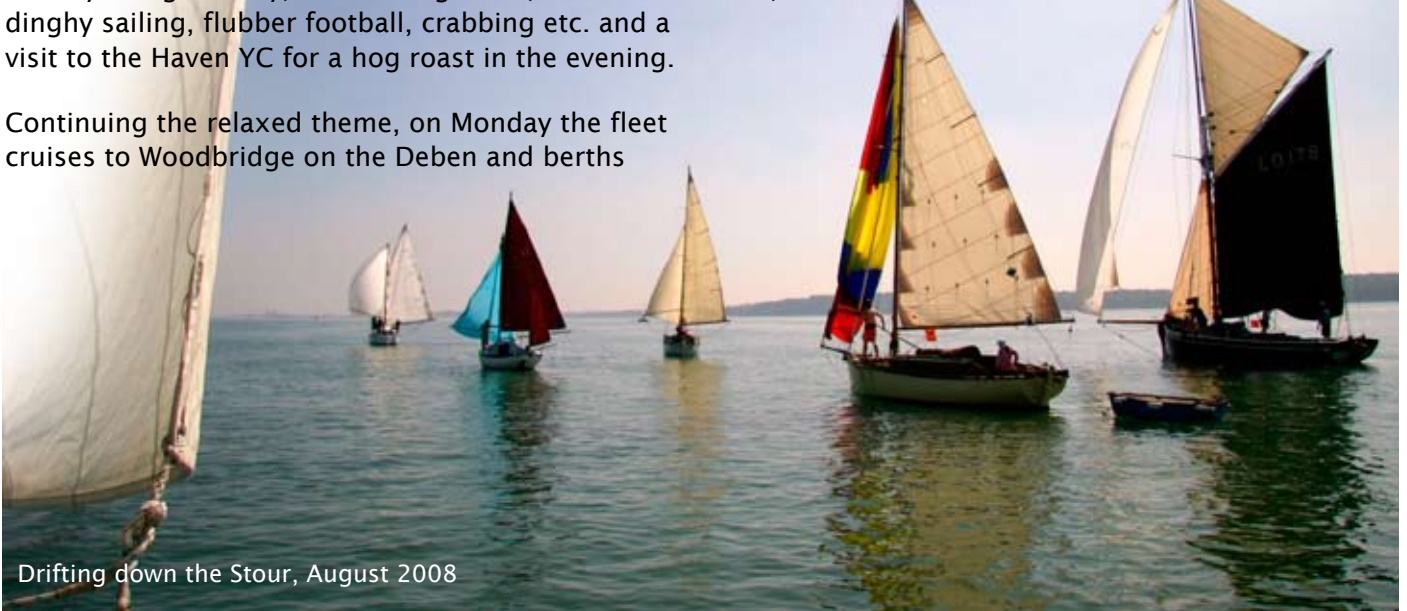
in the Tide Mill marina – expect to raft up several deep. Remember to shop for Wednesday's BBQ.

Tuesday sees something entirely different, a mystery coach tour in the morning, returning about 14.00 to give time for a leisurely sail down river for an evening meal in the Ramsholt Arms.

The pace starts to hot up on Wed. with a passage race to Stone Point at Walton for a beach barbecue with optional sand, and the going really gets tough on Thursday with a race around the cans in Pennyhole Bay, returning to moor in Titchmarsh marina and a meal in the Harbour Lights restaurant.

More racing on Friday, this time a pursuit race to Mistley Quay on the Stour, before dropping back down to moor off Wrabness and another barbecue – food provided this time.

Then on Saturday there is the Two Rivers race to Pin Mill, with time for a swift Adnams at the Butt and



Drifting down the Stour, August 2008



All traditional rigs are welcome

Oyster, before berthing in Suffolk Yacht Harbour (aka Levington).

To the relief of the more mature competitors, Sunday's Presidents Cup race is the final event, before the usual riotous meal and prize-giving in the Lightship.

On Monday, we go home and lie down.

The entry forms are on the website, so get them off NOW. (No, not you Mildred). Those outside the web, telephone Clare Thomas on 01473 832808 and she'll send you a form. Or you can turn up on any day and join the fleet for as long as you like – we're quite flexible, just look for the smack Transcur and ask for organiser Pete Thomas, but he would appreciate a bit of notice to arrange berths and meals. He can be contacted on 07933 785867, or find Pete the Knife on Reverie (07831 525233).

Maldon Town Regatta

Before you know where you are, it's September and the Maldon Town Regatta, the final sailing event of the season on the 19th. Not many details yet, but there's bound to be a race from West Mersea to Osea and then a visually stunning Parade of Sail to Maldon, followed by a dinner for the Old Gaffers at the Little Ship Club. More info from Peter Maynard on 01621 852808.

Waverley Cruise.

I know it's not proper sailing, but it may be your last chance this year to be on the water with like-minded Old Gaffers; you're invited on a cruise to London on the old paddler Waverley on Sunday 4th October. It will be a beautiful day and an entertaining way to end the season.

Waverley sails from:

Gt Yarmouth 10.00am

Harwich 11.30am

Clacton 13.30

Arrives Tower Bridge 19.30

Buses back arriving approx 21.00

Fare: about £41.00

The web site is www.waverleyexcursions.co.uk
More details from Lorna Hill on 07876 776332

AGM and Social

You really know it's the end of the season when it's time to go to the Area AGM and social, to be held this year on November 14th at Woolverstone. More details in the next issue.



Smacks in the Maldon regatta 2008

Backstay

One of the advantages of building new versus restoring a basket case, is the new boat is watertight; Molly Cobbler certainly was – not a drip – until about 2 years ago when I noticed water was accumulating in the cabin bilge; not much, about a gallon a week, but a gallon goes a long way on a little boat. The weep, more like a snuffle, was traced to a leaky screw-head on the side of the plate case, but what to do about it? Old-timers always wound a strand of caulking cotton round the screw head, but I thought I was out of stock of this item, until I noticed the hem of my cotton chinos was fraying. It was the work of a moment to tease out a strand, back out the screw slightly, wind it round the head, retighten and – the leak was cured.

Moral; never go sailing in a wooden boat without your trousers.

Bernard Patrick

Parish Notice



As regular entrants will know, so-called 'Reed's Numbers' are issued to competitors at the major events, to be flown conspicuously (and preferably the right way up) from the rigging as an aid to identification of the many

gaffers who would, apparently, prefer to remain anonymous even when they're winning. These numbers are given out on receipt of a returnable £10 deposit – that is, if returned at the same event. But such is the excitement and confusion accompanying the average gaffers event (to say nothing of the short term memory of some

members), that the numbers are often not returned and the total stock is being depleted. To rectify this, your committee have magnanimously declared an amnesty on Reed's Numbers, and any you may have lurking at home can be returned to any committee member, who will be delighted to refund your deposit. (Maximum of £10 per member – don't try returning half a dozen sets and expect to be rewarded with £60 – we're not that generous).

That's all for this time, except to join with the Met Office in apologising for the way the summer is turning out; but I predict the Maldon Town Regatta will be a scorcher again!

Send any articles, pictures, comments, items for sale etc to me,

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The next issue of Eastcoaster is due out in November 2009, so submissions by early October please.

Finally, could I remind members who may have changed address, please tell someone! Preferably the Association Membership Secretary Peter Lyons (tel: 02891 453099), or me, or both. On the other hand, if you have told us of your move, but are not getting the newsletter, let me know.

Production by Steve Daley-Yates; steve@xited.co.uk

Printed by Reprohouse of Marks Tey, tel: 01206 213 276



Southwold pier