



Forestay

Well, don't say I didn't tell you; in the February issue of Eastcoaster I confidently predicted a hot, dry summer and I've had this confirmed by the Met Office. What they actually said was 'warmer and drier than recently'; it can hardly be worse than the last two years, and a prediction is just that – a greater than 50% chance, they say. But it's been pretty good so far, fine and warm weather for fitting out, a superb Easter weekend and a breezy but dry first Crouch Rally. It has rather gone downhill since then – but hope springs eternal.

In this issue you will see details of some of the events we have in store, but please note the revised system of entering. Previously, this Spring issue of Eastcoaster would have been taken up mostly with entry forms, which, being necessarily single sided, make an awful lot of blank paper to mail out.

This time, we are asking you to print the appropriate entry forms off our www.eastcoastclassics.co.uk website.

Members who do not have on-line access, please request hard copy entry forms by writing or telephoning the treasurer,

Clare Thomas
Green Farm Barn
Barham Green
Ipswich
Suffolk IP6 0QF
Tel; 01473 832 808

We hope this change meets with your approval; printing and sending entry forms only to those members who need them, not to the whole east coast membership, will certainly save the Area money which can be put into improving the events themselves.

Another change being proposed is a modification to the eastcoastclassics website which will limit access to certain areas of the site to members only, with entry by password. **The password is "gaffjaws"**. Our site continues to grow in size, interest and quality and it seems illogical that it should be available for the rest of the world to view, at no cost. Your committee would be happy to have your comments on these changes.



Gwenili

In this Issue

Forestay
Future Events
Reports of Events
Crouch Rally
Low Maintenance Wooden Spars
Handicaps 2009
A Bird on the Broads
Backstay

Future Events

By the time you read this, you will have enjoyed or endured the first four or five sailing events of the year and be anticipating what is to come in June and July.

First off, for the small-boat sailors, there is the **Swallows and Amazons** open boat rally at the Walton Backwaters on June 6th-7th, centred on the Walton and Frinton YC. Arrive Friday if you can, as race briefing is 08.00 Saturday to take advantage of the tide. The traditional course takes the fleet on a circumnavigation of Horsey and Hedge End islands; Arthur Ransome readers should know the area! After lunch there will be a 'build and race a paper boat' competition, before prize-giving and dinner at the W&FYC. On Sunday, the fleet sails down to Stone Point for crab racing and a picnic (no crustaceans will be harmed during this event).

The following weekend, June 12th-14th, the big boats have their turn in the premier gaff rig event of the year, the **East Coast Race** from Brightlingsea. The event actually kicks off on Friday with a self-timed passage race from your home port to West Mersea, arriving in time for the traditional sea food lunch, before cruising down to Brightlingsea. Here you will be allocated a berth for the weekend and go ashore to register for the main race, which starts from 09.00 at Bateman's Tower on Saturday 13th. We are hoping to reintroduce the long course down to the Spitway this year, so by the time you get back to Brightlingsea you will be looking forward to the free beer at the crews' reception in the afternoon and to prize-giving, food and music in the Colne YC in the evening. On Sunday, a dinghy rowing race on the boating lake has been organised to dispel the



Swallows and Amazons

hangovers, followed by a Parade of Sail to Wivenhoe YC for a hog roast. The open boats haven't been forgotten; they race to Wivenhoe on the Sunday afternoon. More food in the CYC in the evening and the fleet disperses on the Monday.

Please note that **you must order and pay for your sea food lunch when submitting your entry form**, to give the organisers some idea of numbers.

You have a week to recover and then it's up to the Stour for the increasingly popular **Royal Hospital School** race and rally at Holbrook on June 20th. Organiser Mike Robertson would like everyone to arrive on the Friday at Wrabness, where there



Gromit at the start of the 2008 East Coast Race

should be free moorings, in readiness to proceed over to Holbrook Creek for a school breakfast, followed by a tour of the historic school. After lunch, there will be racing for cruisers, Shrimpers, open boats etc., just to give you an appetite for a barbecue in the evening on Wrabness beach.

Two weeks later, on July 3rd-6th, is the **Southwold rally**, starting with a passage race from your home port to Southwold on Friday, with a barbecue at SSC in the evening – please bring your own food. The Sole Bay Race takes place on the Saturday and there is a party with music in the evening. Sunday is stay-ashore day, with the main attraction being a tour of Adnams brewery, then a tour of the pier punctuated by a stop for a fish and chip lunch, then more sightseeing, then over to Walberswick..... sounds quite exhausting.

But the next event should be quite relaxing; every other year the Dutch have their **Classic Yacht Regatta**, with an OGA organised feeder race from Harwich. This year, we are organising a cruise in company around the east coast for our Dutch colleagues in the week before the feeder race and everyone is invited to join in and swell the numbers. The Dutch plan to arrive at Shotley Marina on 11th July and we are invited to join them on Sunday 12th in the Shipwreck bar in the evening. Even if you're not taking part in the cruise, come by land or sea and give our visitors a rousing welcome. On the 13th, the fleet sets off in company to Brightlingsea, then to Maldon/Heybridge on the 14th, W.Mersea on the 15th, Wrabness and barbecue on the 16th, back to the Orwell on the 17th for lunch at Pin Mill before finishing at Levington Marina. I said it was relaxing!

There will be a briefing for the passage race in the Lightship at Levington at 19.30 on the 17th. The passage race itself starts on the 18th from Harwich entrance.

The Dutch event, the **11th Shipmate Classic Yacht Regatta**, is five days of racing, rallying and socialising based on Hellevoetsluis, starting on July 22nd and preceded by cruises to various harbours, starting in Steenberg, then Willemstad before departing in company for Hellevoetsluis. Initial information about the Passage Race is on the East Coast OGA website and information about the Regatta is available from the Shipmate website:- <http://www.scyr.nl/>

You can enter the Regatta on line through their website and the OGA contact for the event is Pete Thomas. Tel 01473 832808, but note that the

contact for the 'British tour' is Sue Lewis tel.07900 242452.

More details and entry forms for all these events can be found on our area website: www.eastcoastclassics.co.uk.

Reports of Events



Brian Hammett, National President and impromptu speaker

Annual Dinner at the RBYC

We had finished our prawn cocktail starters and about half the diners had been served with their main course, when the service seemed to become a little sporadic. Peter Thomas, the area president, rose, tapped his glass for silence and announced that the caterers apologised for the relative slowness of the service, but the Burnham lifeboat had just been called out on an emergency, and one of the waitresses was in the crew! It could only happen at an Old Gaffers dinner.

More than seventy members and guests had gathered in the RBYC for the annual dinner, the main social event in the area calendar, and were served with an excellent four-course meal, concluding with coffee and port.

After the splendid dinner, the after-dinner speaker was introduced – or rather he wasn't, being indisposed, so veteran Old Gaffer and present National President Brian Hammett stepped into the breach and entertained us with his life story. In his

early years he worked with John Scarlett, a founder member of the OGA, and like John, Brian first sailed bermudan rigged boats. He recalled that his first Old Gaffers experience was a rally on the Stour, enjoying the tricky navigation up to Mistley and the pleasure of a Wrabness beach barbecue – plus ça change!

Yachting journalist Dick Durham was present and was persuaded to entertain the assembly by recounting a couple of anecdotes involving Mike Peyton, famous cartoonist and Elder Gaffer, who was also there. The first concerned Mike taking his new bride on their honeymoon from Southend to the Medway – by canoe! Passing slowly by the end of the pier, they were observed by a mother and her young son and mother was heard to remark “Don’t you dare spit on it, Alfie, you’ll sink it!”

The other occurred when Mike was crewing on a friend’s boat. On enquiring about the heads, he was told they were out of order. Mike said no problem, I’ll use a bucket, remarking that “It takes a real man to block a bucket!”

Mike, in turn, did his bit by donating one of his original cartoons to be auctioned and it fetched a splendid £250, which together with the £350 raised in the raffle made a very welcome contribution to area funds.

So concluded another annual dinner, and the thanks of all present go to organisers Trevor Rawlinson and Roy Hart, to the many members who donated raffle prizes and to the Royal Burnham YC for the use of their magnificent clubhouse.

Quiz Night

All the President’s Men get Wooden Spoon!

“How many legs has a snooker table?” barks Sue ‘Iron Lady’ Lewis, and the annual OGA quiz is underway. This very popular event, now in its second year, was again hosted by the Stour SC at Manningtree and the bar area was heaving as the class of '09 hunched over their exam papers, beads of sweat standing out from brows as sluggish memories were dredged to answer such probing questions as ‘How many countries in the EU begin with the letter S?’ (4) and ‘Who wrote the autobiography Last Chorus?’ (Humphrey Lyttelton). So this wasn’t an Ancient Gaffers quiz, no questions on spankers or futtocks, more everyday general knowledge which left some old salts floundering, and it was no surprise that the winners were



Mike Peyton; Elder Gaffer, cartoonist and wit

relative youngsters. The winning team, ‘Free the Quay’ led by Simon and Bettina Bullimore, won by only a single point and there were ties for second and fourth places. But the important thing was that everyone had a really great time – well done Sue.

Oh, I nearly forgot; in last place was the team including the National and Area Presidents – they’ve obviously got weightier things to think about than ‘How many spikes on the Statue of Liberty’s crown?’

After celebrating or commiserating at the bar, everyone gathered downstairs for a fish and chip supper, ably organised by Julie Osborn, followed by music and a sing-song to round off a memorable evening.

Bernard Patrick



the Thomas family

Easter Egg Rally and Fitting-out Supper



Chunky Chicken Hatches Surprise at Gaffers Rally

organiser Mel Fox tries to remain anonymous

What a start to the Easter Egg Rally, the first sailing event of the year! Ten boats and four smack boats turned up at Shotley Marina, reviving the glory days of more than a decade ago – and brought with

them fine weather and light winds for Saturday's open boat 'raid' across to Essex. Four smack boats locked out for the sail and beach landing at Harwich prior to a well-organised assault on the Bell Inn .

Light winds and strong tides meant sailing skills were tested but Papa Stour made it all the way under sail; Lettuce and Happy Days were seen rowing, and Whoopie needed the outboard to make it to the beach .

Some Gaffers crossed over to Harwich by ferry and there by chance they found a pirate Radio Ship moored at Ha'penny Pier. Wendy (of Spare Rib fame) charmed the famous Tony Blackburn into signing a card – well done Wendy – before wandering round to the Bell Inn and meeting up with the smack boat sailors before heading back to Shotley .

The inaugural Fitting Out Supper on Saturday evening was a great success – fifty-five diners sat down to a delicious curry dinner and a chance to catch up on OGA gossip . The highlight of the event



Event treasurer Julia finds money gives her a headache

was a surprise visit from 'Chunky Chicken' who magically appeared laden with sacks of chocolate eggs and was piped into the dining room by our very own Scottish piper .

Easter eggs were given out to the skippers of the smack boats, with a special egg going to Papa Stour for sailing non stop to Harwich! 'Chunky Chicken' then handed out eggs to all the lady Gaffers.

The atmosphere at the dinner was further enlivened by the presence of the first ever Shotley Shanty Festival; the music and singing seemed to continue non-stop the whole weekend.

Boats attending: Avola - Reverie - Victoria - Ro' an Mor - Transcur - Gromit - Ellen - Robinetta - Ariel - Flamingo

Smack boats - Papa Stour - Lettuce - Happy Days - Whoopie



three smack boats on the Harwich raid

Crouch Rally

Record Turnout for First Race of the Season

It's not often you hear a good weather forecast for the Crouch rally, but this year Essex Radio was confidently predicting 18deg, winds S/E 2-3 for the Saturday, a little cooler on Sunday with a NW 3-4; ideal for the race up to Fambridge. Seventeen boats turned up on the Saturday to pick up one of the many vacant moorings or raft up on the RBYC's convenient pontoon, before gathering in the club for a very social natter and excellent bar food from the very busy galley.

At the race briefing on Sunday morning, there were some anxious faces scanning the anemometer, as it showed gusts of 20kts, but rally supremo Trevor Rawlinson took note of their concerns by reducing the course by a mile or so, the fleet had to run 'only' to the Crouch buoy, before setting out on the long, long beat to Fambridge.

Results



Greensleeves

Boat name	Rig	Thcf	Start	Finish	ET hms	ET mins	CT	Final Position
Charm	Gaff	0.969	11:30:00	15:11:17	03:41:17	221.28	214.424	1
Greensleeves	Gaff	0.86	11:30:00	15:42:08	04:12:08	252.13	216.835	2
Mary Ritchie	Gaff	0.95	11:30:00	15:29:28	03:59:28	239.47	227.493	3
Gwenili	Gaff	0.946	11:30:00	15:40:16	04:10:16	250.27	236.752	4
William	Gaff	0.925	11:30:00	15:59:42	04:29:42	269.70	249.473	5
Ella Rose	Gaff	0.914	11:30:00	16:15:47	04:45:47	285.78	261.206	6
Janty	Gaff	0.897	11:30:00	16:28:18	04:58:18	298.30	267.575	7
Otter	Gaff	0.9	11:30:00	16:27:31	04:57:31	297.52	267.765	8
Alice & Florrie	Gaff	0.906	11:30:00	DNS				
Bonify	Gaff	0.961	11:30:00	DNS				
Deva	Gaff	0.866	11:30:00	DNF				
Molly Cobbler	Gaff	0.842	11:30:00	DNS				
Robinetta	Gaff	0.9	11:30:00	DNS				
Flamingo	Berm	0.95	11:30:00	15:15:49	03:45:49	225.82	214.526	1
Maid of Tesa	Berm	0.914	11:30:00	15:31:27	04:01:27	241.45	220.685	2
Random	Berm	0.929	11:30:00	15:38:47	04:08:47	248.78	231.120	3
Hussar	Berm	0.914	11:30:00	15:42:56	04:12:56	252.93	231.181	4

Eight gaffers and four bermudans started on the Royal Corinthian line at 11.30, in a freshening NW'ly gusting 25kts (F6); past president Rob Williamson was first across in Maid of Tesa, but he was soon overtaken by Robert 'the bagpipes' in Charm, reputedly calling 'uisge' (gaelic for 'water' and pronounced 'whisky'), as the fleet tore down tide and down wind to the first, and only, mark. Martin in Gwenili was actually first to the mark but was travelling so fast his navigator failed to see it and they stood on for the Outer Crouch buoy. As did Roy Hart in his 19ft Memory, Greensleeves; Roy was going like a train under full sail having lost his reefing line earlier to a passing Squib, and was probably too busy explaining quietly to his novice crew which string to pull to notice buoys going by. The following boats



Mary Ritchie

gleefully took advantage of these lapses and Mary Ritchie actually rounded first, followed by Charm. The long upwind leg was an opportunity to play the wind-shifts, and by the time the fleet was negotiating the Burnham moorings Charm had pulled out a useful lead over Mary Ritchie, which was held to the finish at the Fambridge YC line. Greensleeves did spectacularly well, in spite of overstanding the first mark, to be fifth over the line and depriving Mary Ritchie of second place on corrected time.

All the windward work suited the bermudan class, the winner Flamingo's corrected time being only six seconds behind Charm. Rob in TeasMaid was second, and Random squeaked ahead of Hussar by less than four seconds, to finish third.

After all the exercise, it was time to relax with glass in hand at any number of spontaneous boat parties. But



Robinetta



And for my next trick . . .

there was the odd minor disaster; Mike managed to get one of his mooring lines around Owendo's prop, but by gathering a dozen innocent onlookers onto her foredeck, the stern was lifted just enough for Mike to unwind the rope and everyone was happy.

After which diversion, it was time to gather at the Fambridge YC for a DIY barbecue, followed by home-made pudding and then prize-giving. And to further broaden the smiles of all present, the forecast for the next day was W/SW F3-4, and there would be a cooked breakfast in the club for everyone, to send them on their way.

So ended another enjoyable Crouch rally, thanks Trevor, the RBYC and the Fambridge YC.

Bernard Patrick



These asylum seekers seem happy to have reached Fambridge



Maid of Tesa

Low Maintenance Wooden Spars

....now there's a contradiction in terms



Colin on Plum

As you will all know, maintaining a varnished wooden mast can be a very time-consuming chore. The ravages of the weather, a salty environment, the sun's UV and abrasion from running rigging, topsails and gaffs are all working against you to expose the bare timber below the thin skin of varnish. There are many ways of maintaining a wooden mast, and I believe that through the OGA we should all share our maintenance experiences and "best practices" to ensure that our fleet of boats outlasts us and we get the maximum sailing time in them. Therefore I would like to pass on to you my experience of maintaining Plum's mast over the last 10 years, as I have been pleasantly surprised by the result, having now got to the position where I need to varnish it only every four or five years.

The story starts 12 years ago, two years before I bought Plum, when the mast was taken back to bare wood as part of a repair job to a failed glue joint, and given two coats of Blakes epoxy resin by the boatyard at Waldringfield in 1996. The yard applied varnish over the epoxy, which is essential as epoxy resin has very poor UV resistance, although I do not know which varnish they used. In April 1999 the varnish was still in excellent condition, so I de-greased with acetone and wet-and-dried the varnish (240 or 300 grit) and, after consulting Blakes Paints, I used their one-pack "poly-varnish" applying two coats without rubbing down between. In Feb 2002 I lightly wet-and-dried and applied another two coats of the

same varnish. In April 2005, as the varnish was still in excellent condition I was going to repeat but I discovered that Blakes had discontinued their one-pack "poly-varnish" and after consultation with them I applied three coats of their two-pack "Diamond" varnish on top. Normal advice is not to apply a two-pack paint or varnish over a one-pot type but Blakes assured me that in this instance they were compatible. Blakes said their "Diamond" varnish should last at least four years. Right now, in January 2009, after four years, the mast varnish still looks like new and in the next few months, as soon as the temperature is high enough, I will apply another two coats. Maybe this time I will be brave and make this application last five years. This all saves me time and money, particularly as I leave the mast standing for four or maybe five years, just regularly inspecting the rigging and fittings from the bosun's chair. Throughout the last 12 years the epoxy/varnish skin has always stayed intact with no discolouration, cracking or wear-through, so, as you would expect, I am very happy with the result and hope this experience is of use to readers.

However, Plum's bowsprit does not have the same treatment. This has my other long-term favourite product: on bare wood.... apply one coat of "Sikkens HLS" followed by two coats (four is better) of "Sikkens Cetol Filter 7". With this there is no need to rub down between coats and it is also very tolerant of temperature extremes when applying - down to 5deg C - and it's touch dry in an hour. Then apply

one coat of the "Sikkens Cetol Filter 7" every year and it lasts very well. It has been on the bowsprit for 5 years and on other parts of Plum for over 12 years. It does not look as good a varnish but from 30 feet away looks terrific. This Sikkens stuff comes in a range of colours (Pine, Teak, Mahogany, etc) but use only the Pine (the lightest) colour on all wood types otherwise the result is a very dark muddy colour which has resulted in a number of people criticising the stuff.

Colin Stroud (Heard 23, Falmouth Working Boat: "Plum")

PS

Lucky Colin! His experience reinforces the old dictum that preparation is the key to a lasting finish, and Plum's mast was fortunate to be given a good initial coat of tough epoxy over the bare wood. When Fabian and I built Molly's mast, I was advised not to use epoxy, as it was believed to be too brittle. Maybe the Blakes on Plum was a flexible coating resin. Instead, I went down the traditional

route, soaking the bare wood with umpteen coats of Varnol, one of those Norwegian products based on natural pine oils, followed by several coats of traditional gloss varnish. It looked superb for 3 or 4 years, but now needs to be re-varnished every year – which is a pain. I believe it's my own fault for lowering the mast every autumn and using it as a ridge pole for the winter cover; rain/condensation gathers between mast and cover, freezes and lifts the varnish. It was looking so bad this Spring that I took it down to bare wood (with an electric plane!) and then applied 3 coats of International Universal Clear Primer – which has previously given excellent results on the hull brightwork – followed by 3 coats of Le Tonkinois traditional varnish.

It would be interesting to hear what other gaffers do; I've seen a few masts with a Sadolin type coating (similar I guess to the Sikkens used by Colin), which is easy and cheap to apply, but personally I don't find the matt brown finish attractive. Any comments?

Bernard Patrick

Handicaps 2009

The East Coast sailing committee met recently and has reviewed some of the yacht handicaps which should lead to closer racing. The handicaps were not changed at all in 2008, because the data for 2008 were not sufficiently accurate to warrant constructive use. However, last year's results were generally much better. We did not include all the races as some would have been a measure of how fast your yacht drifts sideways.

Each boat's actual performance is used to calculate a figure which represents her performance as a plus or minus percentage of her "official/current handicap". We do not adjust the handicap by this percentage, but normally 2/3 of it. Several of the fast boats have had this factor applied more than once. This year, as in 2006, the factor for fast boats is 1/3 and 2/3 for slow boats.

ie. If a boat with a handicap of 1.000 sailed on average 10% better than expected, then her handicap would be increased by 1/3 of 10% (3.3%). Her new handicap would then be 1.033. This effectively means a difference of just under 2 minutes in one hour's racing.

Below are the changes for 2009:

Boat	Old THCF	2009 THCF
Charm	0.948	0.969
Kestrel	0.973	1.009
Maryll	0.908	0.859
Ladybird	0.813	0.712

The races counting for the 2009 season's points series and the Felgate Trophy are listed below:

Crouch
East Coast Race,
Royal Hospital School,
Pennyhole Bay
President's Race
Sole Bay
Maldon

All races to count, no discard.

Peter Thomas, area handicapper



A Bird on the Broads

How the other half race

My 'other boat' is a 1925 Broads One Design designed by Linton Hope, called Lapwing, and with her safely sitting on her new trailer, Jim and I headed off to the Norfolk Broads to take part in the 2008 Three Rivers Race.

Organised by Horning Sailing Club, this unique race starts at Horning; sailing on the Bure, Ant and Thurne rivers, the competitors have to round marks at Ludham Bridge (1), South Walsham Broad (2), below Acle Bridge (3) and Hickling Broad (4) before heading back to the finish line at Horning. The marks can be taken in any order and overall the course covers a distance of about 55 miles. Apart from all the crazy hire boats charging around everywhere, the course is made more interesting and tactical because this part of the Broads is tidal, with the current going at anywhere between 1 to 3 knots in either direction – get the tides wrong and you have to sail twice the distance!

Lapwing was craned in at Ludham Bridge the day before the race and we sailed round to Horning, where the Club was already a hive of activity with everybody getting their boats ready. The most spectacular boats were the half dozen Thames Raters, huge skimming dishes with impossibly tall carbon masts; these would be the fastest boats on the water.

After a good night's sleep we were back in Horning early to get everything ready in time for the race briefing and 11:00am start.

As the only Broads One Design in the race, we were in a start with a variety of other Broads keel



map of race showing turning points



not much room under Potter Heigham Bridge

boats and half deckers – mostly Yare and Bure One Designs – White Boats. The wind was a relatively light south westerly, so the start and first section of the race were a gentle run down to the mouth of the Ant.

We had decided to follow the 'traditional' route - Ludham, South Walsham, Acle and Hickling and, with hindsight, on the day this was probably not the best way to do it.

Turning up the Ant, we started a gentle beat up the river against a current of 1-2 knots. The first stretch went OK until we came to a corner with a bank of trees that blanketed the wind completely and the river was choked with a dozen boats competing for the same small stretch of water. After being pushed into the reeds a couple of times and then propelled backwards by an over-enthusiastic push off from a boat in front who themselves were projected forwards (which was downright unfair), we eventually managed to get through the chaos and get up to Ludham Bridge, where we rounded the mark and headed back down river – this time the current was with us.

Back onto the Bure and after an uneventful, if slow, trip into South Walsham Broad to drop off a token, we headed for Acle Bridge and the first decent sail on a wide clear open stretch of the river with few trees. Dropping and raising the mast was managed without a hitch and we reached the turning point at the Stacey Arms at about 4:30pm – perfectly timed with low water which meant that we would have the flood with us all the way to Hickling. We were soon back through Acle Bridge and up to Thurne Mouth, where we took a right turn up the River Thurne and towards Potter Heigham and the notorious medieval Potter Heigham bridge, for probably what was going to be the low point of the race!

The banks on either side of the approach to Potter

Heigham are lined with every conceivable type of chalet, from the very basic to the extremely elaborate, and all have their own quays with a boat or two tied up. Tacking gently up river we were in the middle of a group of three boats when a motor boat followed us up stream – we thought the boat was behaving strangely when it seemed to swerve around the boat behind us and then headed directly towards us, speed up and then with a splintering of wood it rammed right into the side of Lapwing! Bouncing off us, the motor boat then crashed into a boat moored on the bank, before delivering a glancing blow to the boat it first swerved to avoid and disappearing back down the river. Jim and I were both rather shocked and started checking for damage; it was immediately obvious that apart from a few splintered planks above the waterline something had happened below the waterline as water was now streaming into the boat – especially on port tack. We continued as far as the bridge, where we could moor up and have a proper look. Heeling the boat over on her ear, the damage didn't look much worse – most of the damage was above the waterline, although one plank below the waterline had been sprung and was the source of the stream of water – and at least she wasn't leaking at all on starboard tack.

A few judicious strips of gaffer tape later and we decided to continue – so down with the sails and we set off to follow another boat through Potter Heigham Bridge. When we were about ten yards from the central arch and the boat in front was just clearing the bridge, a pushy boat coming the other way shouted for us to let them through first. We soon found out that with the current pushing us towards the bridge that wasn't going to be possible, and having stopped paddling we lost steerage and were soon drifting sideways towards the bridge. In a couple of seconds, and being longer than the archway is wide, we were pinned across the Bridge – at least it gave the spectators standing on the bridge something to watch and stopped the pushy boat coming the other way getting through. After some deft levering with the paddle Jim managed to clear the bows, and we swung through the bridge and headed for the new road bridge after which we could raise the mast and head for Candle Dyke, which leads up to Hickling Broad, and calm down a bit.

By this time the light was starting to fade, so we set up the navigation lights and had a good reach to the far end of Hickling Broad. On the way we passed one of the larger river cruisers who was firmly aground right in the middle of the channel



Lapwing approaching the turn at Ludham Bridge

and made a mental note to avoid that area on the way back. Hickling Broad looked mysterious in the half-light, with little specks of lights bobbing along the channel. We rounded the mark – dropping in our token on the way – and headed back to Potter Heigham. It was now high water, so with no current running the passage through the bridge was uneventful, and after raising the mast and sails again we set off on the final leg back to the finish line at Horning.

It was now 11:30pm – we had been sailing for twelve and a half hours and had covered approximately 45 miles. This meant that we only had about ten miles left to sail – and even allowing for the fact that the wind had died away a bit, we thought that we should get back by about 03:30.

The sail down to Thurne Mouth went well and we even caught up and overtook a couple of boats, but once we reached the Bure progress really slowed down and there was one bank of trees on a corner which took almost an hour to ghost past, tacking to and fro across the river against the current.

By dawn (04:30) we had reached the waterworks and by 5:30am we were on the last straight through Horning village. But with no wind and against the current, progress was painfully slow and we sailed past the same stretch of bank at least half a dozen times. Eventually we crept over the finish line at 07:10 and moored Lapwing, heading off into the club to hand in our declaration sheet and devour a big cooked breakfast. "I'm not doing that again", said Jim – but time softens the memory and I suspect he could be persuaded!

Henry Bird

[Henry is best known for his regular appearances at East Coast rallies in his lovely little varnished clinker cruiser, aptly named Ladybird. Thank you Henry for opening a window on a completely different form of racing – do they allow smack boats? Maybe it could

be a way of increasing the OGA's profile in those foreign parts.]

Backstay

I did quite a lot of (outboard) motoring in Molly over the May Day weekend and noticed something of interest. On the Sunday it was a dead beat up to Fambridge with the flood and, as I wasn't racing, I elected to motor the last mile. It was wind against tide and although it was relatively rough, I decided to stay in deep water (over 20ft) to take advantage of the tide. Molly usually goes well through a chop, having a fine entrance, but I was surprised to see the speed was only 2.7kts over the ground, so without moving the throttle, I went over to the shallow, smooth water near the bank, in about 8ft of water and was gratified to see the speed rise to 3.3kts. Conclusion: it's better to stay in smooth water, even if there's less help from the tide. I guess I've been aware of this for a long time; you never seem to get the tidal benefit that you expect from going into the deeper water, but it's nice to have it confirmed. There must be theoretical relationships between depth of water and velocity of flow, and between wave height and resistance; is there anyone out there, with a better knowledge of hydrodynamics than me, who can enlighten us?

That's all for this time. Send any articles, pictures, comments, items for sale etc to me,

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The next issue of Eastcoaster is due out in August 2009, so submissions by early July 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



Here's an Old Gaffer who has all the answers: Charles Stock in Shoal Waters on the Crouch on the May Day bank holiday