



Important!!

Did you see the price of a second class stamp is now 50p? That means, in a full year, our area will pay out £500 in postage alone for mailing Eastcoaster to those members who still wish to receive a hard copy.

But if you're one of the hundred or so East coast members who has opted to receive this issue on your computer, congratulations. Not only can you see the pictures in full colour, but you can bask in the knowledge that you are saving your area real money. The price of postage, paper and printing is rising all the time, whereas your web based version is virtually free, but unfortunately about two thirds of our East coast members still opt to have the expensive paper copy, even though many will also have internet access. So, if you currently get a paper copy through the post, have access to a computer and would rather have scarce area funds directed to providing better social and sailing events, just log onto our website, www.eastcoastclassics.co.uk, go to the members area by typing in `eccmembers` as the user name and `gaffjaws` as the password and you can access not only the current issue of Eastcoaster, but back issues. If you like what you see, e-mail our membership secretary Mike Robertson on holbrookharbourmaster@yahoo.co.uk and he will put you on his e-mail list and advise you as soon as the next issue is available to view on the website.

Yes, I know it's nice to have a paper copy in your hands as you sink into your favourite chair with a nice glass of something, but you can always print a copy off the website; we really must reduce our mailing costs and this seems a fairly painless way to do it.

Bernard Patrick



A sculling notch for Cachalette

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Forestay

The OGA is unique in that it's not an association of owners of identical, one design boats, nor a group of owners meeting and sailing in one geographical area; rather it is an association of people attracted to an idea – the preservation, rebuilding or construction of boats that are cherished, irrespective of history or provenance. In the last issue we looked at two very different craft – the beautiful Katie, a reproduction of a classic gentleman's yacht rendered in modern materials, and the comfortable and homely Robinetta.

This time the spotlight falls on an even humbler boat, an example of one of the many miniature cruisers being turned out in the 1960's with the surge in glass fibre construction and which introduced countless folk to coastal sailing. The Topaz class could never be described as having classic looks, none made outstanding voyages as far as we know, but as you will read in this issue, Dunlin was rescued from almost certain oblivion, has been restored to sailing condition and is giving her new owner much pleasure. The resurrection of such craft may not be seen as mainstream gaffering, but there's no doubt it's something worth doing and should be encouraged.

Reports of Events

Ha'penny Breeze

The first social event of the year was in fact by courtesy of the Pin Mill SC, they put on a showing of the classic sailing film Ha'Penny Breeze on Feb 11th. The event was very popular – standing room only – and we are indebted to the PMSC for the invitation. The film is set in Pin Mill, just post war, and although the story line is a bit thin and clichéd and the accents hilariously public school (were the Cork lightship crew ever BBC announcers?), the shots of the village, the river and of course the sailing, provided enjoyable viewing and made the audience appreciate how the area has kept its charm over the years. Although we may now deplore the spread of moorings around Pin Mill and the growth of white hulls and three cornered sails on the river, there's no doubt that the popularity of sailing since the film was made has brought life and a degree of prosperity to the area.

Annual Dinner

March 3rd was the occasion of the East coast area's Annual Dinner, held as usual in the hospitable Royal Burnham YC and this year almost eighty

Diners at the Royal Burnham YC



members and guests sat down for the excellent four course supper, which included the traditional sticky toffee pudding.

The Dinner is the one event of the year where gaffers and their ladies are encouraged to dress up, so blazers, smart suits and posh frocks were de rigueur and, as it is also the first time gaffers will have met since the end of the previous season, it's a great occasion for gossip and reminiscing, with the RBYC bar doing a great trade.

The after dinner speaker was Max Liberson, who gave us an entertaining account of sailing from Battlesbridge to the Caribbean and back in a 42 ft ferro cement ketch which cost him all of £1500; brave man!

As is becoming traditional, Elder Gaffer Mike Peyton auctioned one of his cartoon originals to help area funds – thank you Mike. This raised £100 and concluded a very enjoyable evening, with only the thought of the tortuous B1018 back to base to mar the memory. Actually, gaffers seem to be becoming more responsible and many stayed overnight in Burnham after the event, either in the Club cabins (which were fully booked some time before the event), in local hostels or on their boats. Robert and Lena had sailed over from Faversham in Crow, as usual, and spent the night on the RBYC pontoon so they didn't have far to stagger after the dinner, but Sunday's forecast of SE'ly F5 to 7 for the return trip no doubt dispelled any hangovers!

Many thanks again to Trevor, Elaine, Roy and the Royal Burnham staff who helped to make it a memorable evening.

BP

Easter Egg rally 6-9th April

Easter Bunny Rally 2012 - Lolling at Shotley (Laughing Out Loud)

The Easter Bunny was undoubtedly the star of the show and, as it was chocolate bunnies that she distributed on the night, the Rally is henceforth re-christened.

Avola and Lillibullero locked into Shotley together on Good Friday afternoon, followed later by Mike McCarthy's 24ft motor boat Emma Hamilton and Paul's big ferro-cement ketch Gem.

After last year's sunny treatment, it was back to grey skies for the raid on Harwich on Easter Saturday but, undaunted, 5 crews sailed across in small open boats. The wind was kind so it was a gentle reach across the harbour followed by a less than elegant scramble to get aboard the converted lightship which houses the Harwich and Dovercourt Sailing Club. Thankfully we had the convenient stepping stone of Emma Hamilton moored alongside. We were made most welcome at the Club despite our being a rather large and noisy crowd, and club members seemed pleased to show us their newly refurbished lower deck.

Then back to our boats and a quick sail round to Ha'penny Pier for picnic and café lunches, various, and a look round the new Lightship Museum on LV18. It seems she had as many as 9 crew and their cabins can be viewed, with the bunks made up and various personal items of the era to create the atmosphere. Perhaps a bit tidier than it would have been with men living and working aboard but nicely done and worth the visit.

Dinner back at Shotley Shipwreck started quietly but after a few drinks and an excellent (so it was commented) fish & chip supper, the fun started. Mike Robertson had kidnapped the Crouch Mafia Horse's Head from Mike McCarthy and made a short speech holding it to ransom for pizza (something to do with crew rations on the short crossing to Harwich earlier in the day – we weren't sure what it all meant but that didn't seem to matter). Mike M didn't understand what was going on either so he stepped forward to receive the Horse's Head (again) and Mike R was so taken aback that he surrendered it to him with no (visible) exchange of pizza or any other Mafia token in return. Lol (Just in case you are not yet up with the modern technical jargon lol stands for laugh out loud.)

Brian Hammett obliged by auctioning off some spare puddings and raised over £20, with the main recipient of the puddings being Robert Hill who had been heard to comment after his second plate of chips that he was "never full". All credit to Robert for doing justice to the pudding glut and still managing to play his bagpipes. Lol.

The dulcet tones of Robert's fudge-cake-fired pipes heralded the arrival of our very own Gaffers' Easter Bunny Girl. It seems we can still rely on Wendy Wetherill to bring a touch of glamour to our events and she looked fantastic. Our nautical bunny girl kindly presented Easter Egg prizes to the following winners:

- To the boat having come the furthest to the rally, excellent ferry boat to Harwich, and also the only boat to have helped someone (Peter) lose his sailing virginity in the River Stour that very day, was Gem.
- To the support boat and pizza parlour MV Emma Hamilton, and provider of excellent cabaret her skipper – Mike McCarthy
- To 5 young gaffers (3 Masters and 2 Thomases) who not only joined in the day's events in the sporting gaffer fashion we now almost take for granted but who, lacking their mother ships, had made the best of the rainy afternoon once back ashore by having family parties in their cars! (Organisers have taken note and will find a more suitable wet weather venue next year).
- To the most glorious gleamingly varnished Old Gaffer and her proud new owners– Mike Robertson and family with Lillibullero.
- And to Avola (so that Brian Hammett could give Wendy a quick cuddle), for all her miles of travel and the years (and years) of experience of her collective crew.



Sue introduces the Easter Bunny

Wendy then distributed Malteser Easter Bunnies to all of the assembled including the hard-working Shipwreck staff and was presented with a Lindt chocolate bunny herself for being such a good sport.

There was no band this year but there was music and entertainment! Keith Watson played his guitar and sang, Alison Cable played her lute (we think it was a lute!) and sang, and Ian Smith accompanied on bodhran, with Robert and his pipes. Melvyn gave us the low down on Walzing Matilda and Mike Robertson gave an imaginative version of "Hole in my Bucket" involving the Horse's Head (which he had kidnapped again) and lots of help from the audience, which ended up perhaps being more of a hindrance. Much laughter – oops, I mean lol.

Jo Masters played beautiful tunes on her penny whistle including a duet with Anna, and another beautiful duet featured Rik and Yvonne singing together, so they told us, for the first time ever. We hope to hear them again!

Many thanks to all those involved – the OGA ferries, the H&DSC, the Lightship Museum, The Shipwreck, the Auctioneer, the Piper, the Bunny Girl and all the musicians and entertainers.

Numbers were slightly down this year; was it the weather, or would gaffers like to do something else at Easter? If you have any thoughts about the timing of the event (it's only really a one day and evening event, so it doesn't have to be on a Bank Holiday weekend for example) or the programme, or the venue please let your committee know!! Email ecsec@oldgaffersassociation.org

Sue Lewis



Harwich raiders

“DUNLIN”

After retiring from teaching in 1993 due to ill health, finances dictated that my boat, a Corribee, had to be sold to see how far the much lower income would stretch. My only solace was an ancient Lark dinghy that my bad back forbade me to sail, so my two young children went without sailing as well. Before going off to Norfolk for our hols my wife and I popped into Woodbridge to check the Lark. Walking back through the boatyard I spotted Dunlin, although we didn't know that was her name at the time and in spite of weeds two foot tall growing in the cockpit, wide open hatches and rain water over the berths, I fell instantly in love. Eighteen feet, three berths, bilge keels and dreams of drifting down to Ramsholt took over my senses.....but we went on holiday.

All week I cogitated how much could she be on the market for? Would they trade in the Lark and would my pension stretch to a mud mooring? Immediately we got home I went to the yard and talked to the man. After half an hour the deed was done, the Lark and some notes from my wife (it was my birthday) and Dunlin was ours.

My daughter and I started work a few days later, clearing the weeds and emptying two hundred buckets of water out of her, scrubbing, scraping and scratching around we discovered that all the internal woodwork was solid mahogany, as was most of the exterior trim. The rudder and tiller, although white with neglect, were to strip and glow golden again after fifteen coats of Dek's Olya. As we had bought her late in the season there was no chance of getting her afloat, so after making her

dry, clean and secure, we covered her up for the winter, retiring to make endless lists of jobs to be done, kit and equipment to be bought and start dreaming of the season ahead of us.

Early in the spring I dug out the sails and spars from the inner depths of the yard lofts, and discovered her name.... Dunlin; it seemed appropriate that she was named after a small wading bird as she only draws 22 inches. My wife and I painted the decks with masonry paint, the cockpit and cabin sole with garage floorboard paint, but all the bright work got ten to twelve coats of Dek's Olja just for the joy of seeing the golden glow of mahogany. The boom had to be split, sanded and re-glued new running rigging rove, and all the split pins and clevis pins replaced. Due to theft, most of the deck fitting had to be replaced, including the jib furling gear. A second hand outboard was acquired, a simple bracket was fabricated, camping stove installed, a bucket for the obvious, the bottom anti fouled and we were away.

The next season started with the discovery that the standing rigging was made of 3mm flexible wire, so down came the mast, made easy with a frame fitted permanently on the foredeck and cap, fore and back stays were replaced with 4mm stainless in less than an hour. She didn't have an anchorage point for the back stay but one was quickly sorted out, (point to remember) the rest of the season my family and friends enjoyed much pottering between Woodbridge and Felixstowe Ferry, via The Maybush, Ramsholt Arms and the Ferry Boat Inn.

That autumn we gave the hull three coats of epoxy tar to allay fears of osmosis. New cushions made the cabin much more homely, and the additions like foghorns, flares, harnesses etc made the sense of safety more real. Laying up that autumn came quickly, as a move from the house to a bungalow necessitated by my back problems, leaving me with time on my hands to make more lists.

The first change after the Christmas holidays was the design and construction of telescopic boom gallows made beautifully by Portia Engineering of Ipswich and the mainsheet was roved from deck blocks, through cheek blocks on the gallows. Cleats for the mainsheet are bolted through the upright supports. Under the gallows is a snap shackle to hold an oil lamp to illuminate the cockpit. A friend of mine made a fife rail with seven belaying pins through a stainless bridging gantry over the top of the sliding hatch, protecting the compass and



giving a secure handhold if going forward. Now all control lines from the mast can be adjusted without letting go of the tiller. The same friend made a retracting bowsprit to carry the jib, whilst a new yankee staysail went on the forestay. The bowsprit has since been replaced with a longer wooden one and that itself will be replaced this year with a thicker and longer spar made of Sitka spruce, to improve the slot. Of course many other small modifications have been made over the last few years, but sailing her has been nil for two years due to ill health, leaving me with lots of enthusiasm but not much energy.

We now know that Dunlin is a Topaz.... designed in 1959 and built in 1960/61; her hull, deck, cabin and cockpit are all glassfibre so she must be one of the earliest all glass production boats. She cost £960 new which may explain why fewer than one hundred were built. Her designer was a gentleman by the name of Don Whistance and he ran Leisurecraft Boats, which became the well known Newbridge Boats some time later. We have since discovered that she was originally designed for Gaff Rig ...so no permanent backstay fittings, but two dead eyes on the side decks for running backstays. The mast step is really too far forward for Bermudan sloop rig, but is fine now she is rigged as a cutter. The sail area has gone from 120 to 190 sq feet, plus she also has a purpose built water sail, made by my sail make daughter. Dunlin has yet to show herself at an OGA event, but we live in hope that 2012 will be the year. The Gin pennant will be flying!!!!

P. Graham Winward



Forthcoming events

The next three month period is a peak time in our sailing calendar, in fact the first four events fall on successive weekends. Your committee would like to spread the events out more evenly over the season, but are constrained by tide times, the schedules of host clubs and this year, the Queen, who has decreed that the late May bank holiday falls in June! But we hope everyone will find something to their liking and remember, if you don't want to race, you can always join in the social scene which is a big part of each event; and if you can't face sailing to some distant event, just drive round and join in.

You will find entry forms for most of the events attached to this issue or on the website (under 'events'), so open your cheque book now; getting your entry in early helps the hard working organisers to better estimate possible numbers when arranging berths or meals.

2013

This is also a good opportunity to remind you that next year, 2013, the Association will be celebrating the OGA's silver jubilee; there's information in Gaffers Log and on our website.

On the East coast we will be marking the occasion with a new event; it is planned to extend the traditional East Coast Race weekend to a full week, starting at Ipswich dock on July 20th followed by a programme of cruises and races down the coast and finishing at Brightlingsea on the 27th for the East Coast Race. It is hoped that those gaffers taking part in the round Britain cruise will join us, together with craft from Holland, and the EC Area gaffers who are planning to sail round to Cowes, can then continue to the main OGA Jubilee celebrations at Cowes on 15-18th August.

Because many of your committee will be at Cowes, returning in late August 2013, it will not be possible to organise the usual week-long August Classics cruise next year. However, for those East coast gaffers who are not attending the Cowes event, a local rally could be arranged over the August bank holiday weekend. Please let your committee know how you feel, so that we can gauge the level of interest.

The OGA 50 Book

Also relevant to the 2013 anniversary is the news that Viv Head, Bristol Channel area member, is compiling a history of the Association to be published next year and he is requesting members to rummage in their attics and memories for any stories or anecdotes of the early years. East coast members might like to think back to the 'Shotley days', arguably the high point of our history – how did it begin, why was it so successful, who were the characters and craft (and does anyone have copies of 'The Shitley Spot' newsletter)?

If you have anything, please contact Sue Lewis or Viv Head directly, but soon – time is running out.

Oostende vor Anker 26-29th May

This low key event has grown in popularity over the years mainly because it is so friendly and unpretentious; having had your entry confirmed, you just sail over to Ostend, moor in your free berth in the centre of town with scores of other classic craft and relax while the public admire your boat. Add cheap beer and it's gaffers heaven.

One problem this year has been the confusion over the use of red diesel by UK boats, but this seems to have been resolved; just make sure you keep receipts for the fuel you bought in the UK and don't buy red diesel on the continent!

If you would like to make a real holiday of it, Gravelines has a regatta on the 12-13th May and several boats will be sailing as a flotilla from there to Ostend via Blankenberge.

More information on our website and from Mike McCarthy on 07711 970728.

Crouch and Fambridge rally 2nd-5th June

Normally, we would have two separate events on the Crouch in May, coinciding with the two bank holidays, but it being the Queen's jubilee year, we are having just the one event on the Jubilee bank holiday at the beginning of June. The intention is to take part in the gaff/classic class in an open race on Saturday, organised by the Fambridge YC, and cruise up to Battlesbridge on the Sunday, where there will be a Jubilee street party. The fleet will return to Fambridge on Monday and disperse on Tuesday.

Details from organiser Trevor Rawlinson on 01621 783969.

East Coast Race 9-10th June

After the informality of Fambridge, the following weekend sees the most prestigious event in the Area's calendar, the East Coast Race and Brightlingsea rally. The format will be the same as in recent years, but this time we hope the wind will cooperate and allow the traditional long course down to the Spitway.

The weekend begins on the Friday with a passage race from your home port to finish at – and note this carefully – EITHER Bateman's tower at Brightlingsea OR the Nass beacon off West Mersea; the choice is yours. There will be the traditional sea food lunch in the Packing Shed at W Mersea from 13.00, but you will need to book in advance by checking the relevant box on the entry form and include a cheque for the lunch with your entry fee.

After lunch, diners can drop down to Brightlingsea on the ebb and berth as directed by the harbour master. The race office in the marina will be open from 17.00 to 21.30 for you to register and collect race numbers, sailing instructions and course cards;



Free beer at the smack dock

note that the office will not be open on Saturday morning.

Saturday is race day with the first start at 09.00 – this is less than an hour before LW, so deep keel boats should make sure they get out of the harbour while there's enough water.

After the race, the most important action is to come ashore and hand in your declaration form at the race office before 16.30. You can then go and enjoy your free beer at the smack dock from 17.00 – the guest beer this year is from the local Sticklegs brewery.

The Colne YC are putting on a meal on Saturday evening from 19.00 to 21.00, please get your tickets from the bar, and there will be prize-giving at the race office at 19.00.

You can work off any hangover on Sunday morning by taking part in the rowing races on the boating lake, before preparing to assemble for the parade of sail to Wivenhoe, starting at 14.00.

There will also be the usual race for class 3 open boats from Brightlingsea to Wivenhoe SC, start time 13.00.

The Wivenhoe SC are once again putting on a hog roast, followed by home made cakes – these alone are worth the trip - and gaffers may stay overnight at the WSC pontoon or in the dock upstream of the barrier, but must be prepared to take the ground. Note both are used by commercial fishermen who may wish to moor up at 05.00!

On Monday the fleet disperses after what we hope will have been a memorable weekend.

RHS rally 16th - 17th June

There's no doubt that organiser Mike Robertson gives value for money for this rally, held off the beautiful Royal Hospital School at Holbrook on the Stour, opposite Wrabness. Just look at the programme for Saturday;

0800 – leave your mooring at Wrabness and cross to Holbrook creek

08.30– dinghy into creek

08.45 – walk to school for big breakfast, at 9.00 prompt. Late comers go without and get detention.

09.45 – school activity

10.30 – HW so time to leave to prepare for.....

12.00 – fishing competition, or.....

14.00 – start of the Trafalgar race for class 1 and 4 gaffers and classic bermudans, or...

15.30 – start of race for Shrimpers, small gaffers and cruisers and open boats.

Having worked up a good appetite, it's time to get ashore at Holbrook by 19.00 for the barbecue on the beach with prize-giving and bonfire. Don't forget to bring a plate and cutlery ashore with you.

On Sunday you can go home.

Mike says it's vital that your completed entry form and cheque are received by Clare Thomas by Sunday 10th June so that security arrangements can be made for the school visit.



Southwold rally 7-8th July

Southwold is the furthest north the gaffer fleet venture in the programme of organised rallies and consequently it seldom attracts a big fleet. But it's a very welcoming place and with the attractive town of Southwold with its Adnams brewery, only a short walk away, it's worth making the effort to visit. As usual, there will be racing in Sole bay on the Saturday for gaffers and bermudans, while the open boats get their turn on the Sunday with a 'raid' up the river to Blythburgh for lunch at the pub. This is a very jolly social event, so even if you can't sail to Southwold, put the dinghy on the car and come up the river for lunch.

More details from organiser Lorna Hill on 01473 730661.

Swallows and Amazons 21-22nd July

This weekend it's the turn of the small boats to take centre stage, with racing and socialising based on the lovely Walton Backwaters - Arthur Ransome's 'Secret Water'. The Walton and Frinton YC are hosts once again and the main race will be on Saturday, starting at the club and sailing around Horsey Island. The entry is of course limited to open dinghies in the spirit of 'Swallows and Amazons', but there are umpteen classes, so whether your dinghy is an old smacks boat, a modern gaffer or lugger, or a vintage racer, please come and join in. In fact all are welcome, but if you're wondering whether your particular boat will be acceptable, contact the organiser Pete Elliston on 01206 391870.

There will be a meal at the club on Saturday evening and Sunday will be devoted to less strenuous social events and a dinghy race for youngsters.



Two of the many trophies to be won



Erith EC Heritage Regatta 23rd-24th June

As mentioned in the last Eastcoaster, the Erith YC in Kent are planning a 'Heritage regatta' in June, to coincide with their dinghy open weekend and they are hoping gaffers from other areas will join them. It promises to be a good event, whether you sail round or trail your heritage dinghy.

This letter from their secretary gives more details.

Erith Yacht Club has been the recipient of large grants from various bodies, the Olympic Legacy Fund and Sport England being the biggest of these bodies. As a consequence we have changed the face of the Club and have a large new Clubhouse, training facilities, etc. As one of the oldest clubs on the Thames we also attracted, together with London Borough of Bexley, a large grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to preserve our extensive Club archive.

One of the conditions of this grant was that we conduct a Heritage Regatta, in the main using our fleet of Hamble Stars with our Youth Members sailing the Stars together with our somewhat more elderly Star skippers.

We were hoping that we could attract some other 'Heritage' boats to join us over this weekend, when we are also holding the EYC Dinghy Open weekend. We would be delighted if some of your members might join us and enjoy our hospitality. We would be very pleased if some were able to come for the whole weekend and join us for Saturday evenings social event as well as the sailing events.

As you are probably aware, this period is between the Queen's birthday and the Olympic period so security on the river will be tight and boats coming up the river above Gravesend will need to be registered with the PLA so if any of your Members would like to join us please request that they contact me at the earliest possibility. I think they will find it a unique opportunity and we would be delighted to host members of your Association.

I sincerely hope that the Old Gaffers will be represented at Erith YC on this special occasion and hope to hear from you in the near future.

Val Torreggiani,
Hon.Secretary
Erith Yacht Club.
valerietorreggiani@ntl.com



Great sailing in 2011

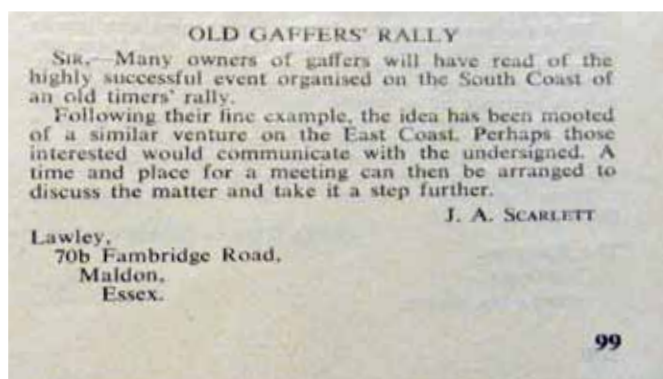
Backstay

It's mid April as I write this and the weather is wet and windy and COLD again after a brief warm spell in March. This saw a flurry of activity at the yard, as owners engaged in a frenzy of rubbing down and varnishing, while worrying that the cold nights might ruin their endeavours.

Personally, I like varnishing and painting, watching the boat emerge from its winter drabness to be fresh and sparkly again and this is a feeling I believe the average plastic boat owner doesn't experience. Glass boats seem to gradually slide into a neglected and drab old age, whereas most wooden ones get tarted up every year until they are condemned to the euthanasia of the chain saw or the mud berth equivalent of a retirement home.

Happy varnishing!

Finally, back to the beginning. Most members will know that the OGA was born out of local races for gaff rigged boats, held separately on the Solent and the East coast. The driving force behind the EC effort was the late John Scarlett, who became the Association's secretary. John Rogers, who has recently restored John Scarlett's boat Essex Melody, has unearthed John's original letter to Yachting Monthly in Feb 1963, in which he proposed a race for 'old timers' and which can be said to be the seed from which the East coast area has grown and flourished.



The letter that started it all

Bernard Patrick

Eastcoaster August 2012

The next issue of Eastcoaster is due out in August 2012, so submissions by mid-July please, to the editor at the snail or e-mail addresses below.

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Could I remind members who may have changed address (snail or e-mail) to tell the membership sec, Mike Robertson, tel.01473 327115. On the other hand, if you have told us of your move but are still not getting the newsletter, let me know. Thank you.

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And don't forget! The Boat Register awaits your boat's details and pictures. Log on to:

www.eastcoastclassics.co.uk/boatregister/