



EASTCOASTER

The Newsletter of the East Coast Old Gaffers Association

February 2021 Issue 126

Forestay

This time last year I was reminding people to buy their Area flags at this year's events... In the end no flags were produced! The Area diary that went out with Eastcoaster was full of events, few of which happened... This year the Diary still has those events, but there are gaps for you to fill in your own dates for many. With COVID lockdown in full force, and no certainty about when socialising will be allowed it is difficult to point at a date and promise something will happen. None the less we have sent out the Diary, and encourage you to write in the event dates as they are decided.

The sudden announcement in Gaffer's Log about Brenda Jago's death came as a surprise, but now Rob Williamson has written a retrospective of her time in the OGA for everyone to enjoy.

Long time OGA member John Rogers has been restoring a family dinghy to useable condition. A report of the technical aspects appeared in PBO last year, but he has given us a more personal account to read, highlighting why the history of even the smallest boat can be relevant to our times.

Sue Lewis has sent in some helpful hints for what is possible while cruising on the Norfolk Broads, as well as a piece about the changes happening along the coast line.

Finally, are you a dyed in the baggy wrinkles Cruiser... or a Keen-Eyed Racer? And what can you do about it? Take our quiz to find out! No prizes for this, except possibly some self knowledge and a few minutes of lockdown tedium lifted .

Hopefully we will all be able to get to our boats soon, and go sailing again. Here's to a better 2021!

Alison Cable editor



Tinkerbelle

In this issue

Forestay

East Coast AGM

Upcoming events

Member News

Brenda Jago

Tinkerbelle the Scow

My Quest in Norfolk

Now you see it....

Quiz

Backstay

The East Coast AGM

I wish I could report that this memorable event had great food, and much socialising. Unfortunately, like so many occasions this year, it was held online through ZOOM, and scrapped back to the bare bones. The President's and Secretary's reports were made available in the previous issue of Eastcoaster, and there is nothing new to report there. The Treasurer assured us that while Area funds are down, due to the cost of building the 2 dinghies, the only money spent to no obvious value went to the manufacturer of the 2020 area flags. Due to the first COVID lockdown these were not made or delivered, so this money will go to our next order, so long as the company survive in the current economic climate...

The committee were re-elected en-masse with no changes, although Robert Holden has offered to help with events in Ramsgate. He will certainly be called on to help with the RBC60 event in 2023, if not before!

The two East Coast OGA dinghies whose build was approved at the previous AGM made good progress at the start of the year, but the first lockdown brought all collaborative work to a halt, and the "Essex" dinghy had not progressed much since. The Suffolk dinghy is in a more complete state, but it is hoped that both will be ready to launch at the next Swallows and Amazons event. After that they should be at all subsequent dinghy events in 2021, where they will be available for OGA members to try. The builders will keep control of their respective dinghies for first year, to see how things go. After that, depending on how it goes, we hope to keep one boat somewhere easy to access, but will have to see how it evolves.

The cost to members of using the boats is still to be decided, with fees going towards annual maintenance. We also hope that those who use the boats will help with the maintenance, and a log of who uses them and when will be kept. The cost should be very reasonable. At the time of the AGM the class name for the OGA dinghy was still the subject of a competition, but the name was announced at the main AGM, of the area will soon be the possessors of two Gaffling 4.1 class dinghies.

What are our plans for 2021? As mentioned in the President's report last issue we are aiming to go ahead with a programme that will be as flexible as possible. Indications are that having a cruise rather than racing is acceptable to most people and will be easier to manage with social distancing. For example, we cannot have shore-based prize givings etc. For this winter, we are hoping to do some things online, as it is not currently possible to meet in person.

The racing prizes could not be given as there was no racing, but Marion Shirley was awarded the Francis B Cooke trophy for the account of her cruise from France to Harwich published in November's Eastcoaster.

Pete Thomas is this year's holder of the Bateman's Tower award for his work on the OGA dinghies, and at the RYA Dinghy show held in February 2020.

Upcoming events

Racing Rules Talk on Zoom Feb 11, 2021 7pm

Our winter events normally entail getting together to eat and drink and be merry, while our summer events include some racing. However nothing is ordinary in these COVID times, and our first winter event is actually about racing.

RYA Regional Rules Advisor Chris Simon will be giving a talk over Zoom to explain the changes to racing rules that come in to play on 1st January.

There are a number of changes including:

1. new safety rules
2. new environmental rules
3. some simplifications of old rules.

The talk has been organised by the Ariel Yacht Club, who have invited us to attend. Being able to join in with events organised by out of area clubs is one of the few benefits of remote talks! If you could like to “attend” please email alison.margaret.cable@gmail.com and I will send you the Zoom link.

Zoom Booze at the Boat Builder’s Futtocks, February 20th 8pm

If you are missing out on casual social chatter with a group of friends then come along to the “pub” with your off licence drinks lined up. We will have “snug” breakout rooms so smaller groups can chat, as well as the “main bar”. This is an experiment in distanced socialising, so please come along and give it a go. The link will be sent out through MailChimp, so check your spam boxes for the email alert!

RYA Dinghy Show 27-8 February

The OGA will be manning a stand at the show again this year and the good news is that visiting costs nothing. The bad news is that it is all virtual. If you would like to attend just search it out on line and register your interest. If you fancy helping out and manning the stand then contact Colin Stroud, the OGA secretary. We have no idea how many visitors there will be to this sort of show, so your help might be desperately needed, or you might sit around doing nothing! Visiting will fill a few hours of lockdown time, and you never know who you might meet on the stands.

The Annual Dinner will not go ahead in its usual date in March, and there are no current plans to hold it later in the year, but you never know what will happen, so watch out for updates about our only formal event!

OGA v Tollesbury, Saturday 1st May

This is pencilled into the diary as going ahead, but the current best estimate I know of Pubs being able to reopen is the “start of May”. The Sailing Club is therefore unlikely to open its clubhouse in time for the event. Once it becomes possible to plan ahead

again I will see if it is possible to reschedule.

The Crouch Rally at the end of May is still on the calendar too, but once again this going ahead is subject to COVID restrictions. More information will be available in the next issue of Eastcoaster.

Dates are fixed for the **East Coast Race (3rd July)** and the **Summer Cruise (24th - 31st July)**. More details will appear in the next issue of Eastcoaster. We also hope to hold our normal Swallows & Amazons weekend, visit Slaughtdon Sailing Club, and add an event in the Norfolk Broads. Dates for these are still to be confirmed.



East Coast Race start, 1963

Speaking of the East Coast Race, the Titheridge name is kept alive there by the Titheridge Cup, for the first boat home crewed by a couple. Wendy Titheridge celebrated her 90th Birthday back in November, and to celebrate it I was sent a picture of the very first East Coast race, with *Sea Pig*, sail number CC19, right in the middle of the group. Wendy was on board for that race, and continued to enjoy sailing *Sea Pig* for many years.

Brenda Jago, An Appreciation.

By Rob Williamson

Brenda joined the East Coast OGA in 1969, no 471, sailing *Barnacle*, (I have no details) and later *Janty*, a Deben, 4tonner, which she sailed with George, her husband.

The 70's and 80's were a time of expansion in the activities of the East Coast, and Brenda joined the committee about this time. Living at Fambridge, Brenda soon became involved in establishing the Crouch Rallies in the Spring Bank holiday period, where unpredictable weather dominated our activities. At one memorable rally, Brenda and team arranged two races on the Crouch, and a planned BBQ on the Saturday evening, in a farmer's field- it blew a gale, with rain, we raced reefed down, and for the BBQ evening Brenda went round the fleet "encouraging" everyone ashore- so we did- and quite enjoyed the soggy event.

Due to Brenda's enthusiasm and her links with the RBYC, these Crouch Rallies became an important part of the OGA calendar, along with the Maldon Regattas, and when she became Publicity Officer, she was able to get reports of our activities in the local papers, notably the Maldon and Burnham Standard.

The East Coast A.G.M.'S were held for many years at the Maldon Little Ship Club, and again Brenda would help organise the event to include a fine supper at the club, after the meeting.

She worked closely with Jon Wainwright, the long time secretary of the Area, helping to organise the annual East Coast race, which for several years was held at the Stone Sailing club. With over a hundred entrants, start and finishes were hectic, to say the least, but Brenda's organisational skills of co-ordinating thirty or so prizes, that were awarded to the various winners, rarely faltered.

When the Shotley event started in 1989, Brenda helped with the liaison with the Marina, and it was acknowledged that her input made the whole event a great success, that was repeated in the events that followed

I think it fair to say, that Brenda helped to establish many of the events of the '80's and '90's which enabled the OGA to flourish, and establish the traditions on which the OGA rests to-day

Thank you Brenda, you were a star!

Bembridge Scow *Tinkerbell*

Words and photos John Rogers

Tinkerbell is a Scow Class dinghy built by AA Combes around 1955 at Bembridge in the Isle of Wight where the first Scow Class dinghies originated before World War One and increased in popularity after World War Two.

Many Scows were also built at Burnham and some still survive around the East Coast.

Scows were originally designed as sailing tenders for gentleman's yachts and all were built to the same basic design although every builder made them a little different. They sail very well even in quite challenging conditions and the shape of their bow entry made them easy to tow as tenders.

Their sailing and handling ability made them firm favourites among Cadets learning to sail and many clubs adopted Scows for dinghy racing.



Improvements in plywood in the 60's led to the development of the Mirror Dinghy and enabled home construction on a small budget. Mirror Dinghies were therefore produced in their thousands making them the preferable option to the expensive Scow which needed skilled shipwrights for its clinker construction.

As a result, the Scow dinghy went into rapid decline, but in 1985 there was renewed interest and a GRP version was made producing today's fleets of GRP Scows which are still found racing at many Solent sailing clubs.

Tinkerbell was passed on to me from a relative whose family had owned her for at least 50 years. She had been stored undercover so her timbers were still sound; but age and drying out had taken its toll on the planking resulting in massive cracks along whole lengths of the hull and particularly along the "lands", the joints where the clinker planks overlap.

After advice from several shipwrights a decision was made to fill the cracks with Epoxy filler and encapsulate the entire outside of the hull to make it sound and watertight. To prevent the possibility of water being trapped in the wood the interior was only oiled and varnished to allow the wood to “breathe” should moisture enter the outer epoxy barrier.

This economical method of restoration, admittedly alien to the purist shipwright, has saved *Tinkerbelle* from the chainsaw and given her a new lease of life. We have retained her basic woody look and beautiful lines and reached our target of getting her sailing again for the family to enjoy, hopefully for many years to come.

It has been a challenging but rewarding restoration demanding shipwright skills such as copper nailing the split planks and refitting the foredeck and gunwales whilst learning the techniques of using modern materials like Epoxy.

My full article on ‘Restoring Bembridge Scow *Tinkerbelle*’ was published in August 2020 Practical Boat Owner and can be found ‘online’. This led to a very unexpected response from a previous owner, Mike Bell who contacted me by email through Maldon Little Ship Club.

The Unexpected Tale of Two *Tinkerbells* and wartime sailing. (as related by John Rogers)

The story begins when Mike Bell was celebrating his mother’s 85th birthday. Whilst looking at old photographs they came across a picture he had never seen before. It was of himself and a friend as youngsters standing on the deck of a Scow called *Tinkerbelle* at Hurst Castle in 1969.

A couple of days later Mike optimistically decided to search for “Scow *Tinkerbelle*” on Google and to his utter astonishment my PBO article popped up. As the tan sails matched with his picture and memories of *Tinkerbelle*, he was prompted to contact me through MLSC website to confirm if it was the same boat and to give me some information as to her history.

Going back a generation, Mike informed me that his father used to sail the family scow called *Tinkerbelle* with a group of teenage friends from Keyhaven YC, until War broke out in 1939 and pleasure sailing was banned. However, the ‘boys’ hatched up a cunning plan to legally keep on sailing by registering *Tinkerbelle* as a Southampton fishing boat. Her number was displayed on the bow but was difficult to read so to keep the authorities happy they always trawled fishing lines over the stern!



The following year the War intensified and as there were reports of German bombers machine-gunning small boats, all sailing was banned. Also, by 1942 the boys were old enough to be called up and join the forces leaving their beloved *Tinkerbelle* to “gently rot away on the riverbank in Keyhaven”.

After the war, one of the old teenage friends Ronnie Dyce, bought another AA Coombes Bembridge scow as a replacement for their demised boat. He called it *Tinkerbelle* in recognition of his own childhood and the friendship he had with Mike's father when they sailed together in the original *Tinkerbelle*.

As children when Mike's family visited Keyhaven, they often sailed with Ronnie on *Tinkerbelle* who with her tan sail added a touch of colour to the vista. The picture taken in 1969 is of Mike in the lifejacket with his friend standing on *Tinkerbelle's* deck, and as provenance Ronnie Dyce's name is still carved on the stock of her tiller. (see picture).

When Ronnie died *Tinkerbelle* was left to his sister, but then the trail goes cold until she was taken over by the English family in the 1980's. Viveca English is my niece and when her husband, who used to sail *Tinkerbelle* as a youngster, realised that he did not have the time to restore her and she was passed over to me. Now having



been restored, *Tinkerbelle* is a delight to sail and has proved a real hit with the grandchildren introducing them to the joys of sailing.

Mike's email, illustrates the personal heritage which is often embedded in an old boat. This is so rewarding when it is revealed, as no doubt many an Old Gaffer has found!

Mike's story also makes me realise what a lucky generation we are as we have never had to contend with disruption of our sailing through war, although we have all experienced the Covid 19 disruption in 2020.

My Quest to the Norfolk Broads

By Sue Lewis

With My Quest's co-owner Barry shielding from Covid, Sue and Howard had near perfect weather between lockdowns to enjoy a 2-week cruise on the Norfolk Broads last summer. Sue has written up their adventures in some detail for the Gaffers Log – subject to acceptance by the new Editor - but here is a “preview in pictures” and some practical help for those who might consider a similar itinerary with a cruising yacht.



Liquid lunch at Stokesby My Quest with 7'6" airdraft

Why? Beautiful scenery of meadows and reed beds, stunning wildlife, pretty villages, waterside pubs, the history of working people in the wetlands: it's really a grown-up theme park of life in a unique environment. And lots of lovely old gaffers to see.

On a coastal cruising yacht? Why not? Makes a change. Great for a family holiday. No size limit here: draft of 4ft was comfortable, though limiting. Mast needs to come down but there are plenty of places to get that done if you can't do it yourself – then the Broads are your oyster.

Getting in: There are 2 points of entry from the North Sea to the Norfolk Broads: to the north via Gorleston and Great Yarmouth, or to the south via Lowestoft.

Via Great Yarmouth there is theoretically a “mast-up” route from the sea, through Breydon Water and the southern rivers, to Norwich (approx 6 hours). However we met only 2 yachts who traversed Yarmouth mast-up and both skippers complained of the inconvenience of having to pre-book bridge openings at Yarmouth (through Port Operations) and delays which had cost them extra nights “trapped inside” the Broads (as they put it). Access to the more picturesque and popular northern rivers and broads



10' headroom at Great Yarmouth

is blocked by a fixed road bridge at Gt Yarmouth with clearance of just 7ft at high water. (More at low water, which is the recommended time to pass, but not enough to plan for “mast-up”).

A further complication is that some of the bridges on the route are ‘historic’ (i.e. elderly) railway bridges and, unlike the old days when the waterways took priority over rail, if there’s any doubt about the smooth functioning of a bridge (due to hot weather for example) it will be left firmly in the “railway unhindered, waterway height-restricted” position with 2 red flags hoisted to mean “not in service”.



Gone to the pub at Coltishall

My Quest 5ft 6 aircraft

Via Lowestoft it is, again theoretically, possible to get as far as Oulton Broad and then on to the outskirts of Beccles without lowering the mast. However in the heat of August 2020 the Mutford railway bridge at Lowestoft was suffering from 2 red flag syndrome so we dropped My Quest’s rig at RNSYC. With the bowsprit rigged, and the mast down but still fixed in the tabernacle, we were an ungainly 42 ft long (for just 23ft of deck) so further adjustments were made. Luckily Mutford lock was in full working order and after payment of the toll we entered our first picturesque Norfolk Broad.

*Going through Wroxham Bridge**photo © Pete Colebourne*

You may have seen dramatic photos of sailing boats in Norfolk shooting bridges, with mast and sails dropped in disarray ready to be hoisted again seconds later, and there are races where this is still done. But in normal, gentle cruising mode the accepted form is to moor up before the bridge, organize lowering the mast in an orderly fashion and then reverse the process afterwards. We had decided early on that My Quest's rig, Broads-built though she may be, was not suitably adapted for this, nor for that matter were her crew suitably inclined. So once the mast was down and (fairly) neatly stowed, down it stayed. We had no regrets about this with hindsight as there were few occasions where we might have wanted to try to sail. With boom crutch deployed as mast crutch we had 7ft 6" air draft, plenty for the southern rivers and, having explored the south as far as Beccles, Loddon and Norwich, and having crossed Breydon Water, no issues with a generous 10ft clearance when passing through Yarmouth at low water.

Tide becomes less of a factor the further you travel from Yarmouth. Maps, guidebooks, websites and apps give tidal data, and bridge clearances at mean high water, but unfortunately they don't always agree. However there are gauges at the bridges which

never lie - in fact we think they are generous and give the height, not at the apex of the arch, but somewhere around hire-boat windscreen height.

A gauge well before the bridge at Wroxham (7ft) gave us notice that it was time to further reduce our air draft: the boom crutch was stowed away and the mast rested instead on a fender on the sliding hatch (no longer slidable – mind your head!) Potter Heigham bridge was even lower (6ft 6”) but gave My Quest no problems with her new 5ft 6” height. This gave us access to beautiful Broads and Meres which we could only really venture part way into, due to our 4ft draft (keel), and even then we had to navigate with caution due to an abundance of reeds and weed.

Resources: We recommend the Heron Maps’ “The Broads Cruising and Touring Map” over Collins/Nicholson. Nicholson have a companion spiral bound “Guide” but you don’t need that either. The Heron map has better maps and includes town plans. A free newspaper “Broadcaster” produced annually by the Broads Authority is invaluable and includes “What’s on”. “The Green Book” lists many classes of Broads sailing boat with outlines to aid identification, and boat names, and regattas. It costs £5 but for sailors coming by road it includes an exhaustive list of facilities for boat launching and recovery.



Distances: tend to be given in hours and they are short and the pace is slow – delightful given the hot sunny weather we had. Riverside pubs are plentiful though busy, worth arriving early as mooring spaces are finite.

Cost: We bought a 2-week pass for £74.50 for our 7m boat. This includes many free moorings so is good value. Maximum stay is 28 days before you have to pay an annual toll and conform to resident craft regulations on gas safety etc. Full details of tariffs on the Broads Authority website.

Facilities are scarce. We mostly used free moorings with no facilities, but there are showers at Beccles and at Yacht Stations at Oulton Broad, Norwich, and Gt Yarmouth. There’s a convenient launderette at Wroxham. Convenient **Shops** are also scarce.

When it comes to leaving it is useful to know that Oulton Broad itself is not included in the range of dates for your Broads pass – you only need the pass when first leaving the Broad, and on your return you just have to be back on the Broad before midnight of the last day.

If time or weather constraints mean leaving your boat and returning later there are a few options. Oulton Broad Yacht Station might let you stay a couple of days but they are very busy so a better solution would be to pass back through Mutford lock to the stretch of water known as Lake Lothing between Oulton Broad and central Lowestoft. It's not pretty, an industrial area of the port, but it has Lowestoft Haven Marina (ABP) not to be confused with their previous location in the outer harbour which is now commercial only. Opposite this marina on Lake Lothing there are some pontoon berths belonging to Lowestoft Cruising Club. We didn't need them in the end but they were friendly and helpful and had room for us— by far the lowest cost option.

One final tip: Take your best binoculars and best camera: the ones you don't usually dare take on board – you won't regret it (we wished we had).

Broads-authority.gov.uk

Lowestofthavenmarina.com

Lowestoftcruisingclub.co.uk



Hickling Broad

Orfordness lighthouse – now you see it...

Sue Lewis

MQ had not been launched until May (that 'C' word again...theme of 2020) and such was the urgency to get her hull in the water that she didn't get the fitting out she deserved. However once the pumps had stopped running she was deemed seaworthy. It's about 40 miles by sea from Harwich to Lowestoft so easily sailed in a day with the right conditions. We left Harwich Ha'penny Pier on July 29TH at 6.30am, half an hour before high water, in a light westerly wind, no reefs needed, and by the time we rounded Landguard the current was with us and we were making 6 knots.



You think you know the coastline quite well and then they go and destroy familiar landmarks – the demolition of Orfordness lighthouse was in progress as we passed (9.15am). The lantern had gone and the familiar red and white building was under siege by bulldozers.

Once we put that sorry sight behind us the sun came out again (literally as well as



metaphorically) and the breeze picked up. Other landmarks were unvandalised: the bizarre House in the Clouds at Thorpeness, Sizewell nuclear power station, first glimpsed at 9.25 and, as usual, in view for hours, then at noon we passed Southwold with its lighthouse apparently intact.

Seven and a half hours from Harwich to the welcoming pontoons of the Nobs and Snobs (RNSYC Lowestoft). The tale of our Norfolk Broads cruise will be told elsewhere but before we knew it, after 2 weeks of warm sunny summer holidays, it was time for the return trip to Harwich.

15TH August 2020 – Inshore Waters
6am “Gibraltar Point to North Foreland NE 4 or 5 in north, Variable 2 to 4 in South”.

Up early and departed Lowestoft 5am. Light NE wind so we tried sailing but were making only 3kts through the water. It was a dull grey day, our holiday was almost over and this was really a delivery trip so at 6am we gave up and motored. It was about 10.30am when I took my rather poor photo of the pile of rubble which was all that remained of the Orfordness lighthouse. The end of an era.

Hot tip when making this trip: If you want to stop over at Southwold you should consider booking now. It's that or follow a suggestion made to us:

ignore their rules and just turn up unannounced. Calling up from outside to request a berth has become, let's say, disappointing.

We pressed on and were glad to be home on Ha'penny Pier in Harwich at 1.15pm.



House in the clouds, Thorpeness



Quiz

By Joe Farrow

It's been a strange season, we've all had to try something new and rumour has it that some diehard Racers have actually enjoyed merely messing about in boats...

So rather than splitting the fleet, is 2021 the year to reconnect with the other side? Definitely. But first you have to work out which one you are in our little quiz. Then there are some rehabilitation activities to try out.

Please choose the answer that most applies in a normal season rather than the bizarre 2020 (there are no right answers). Trophies will be allocated by lottery. The judges' decisions will be final. No correspondence will be entered into.

1. When you sail your boat are you usually:
 - a. Jockeying for position on a start line
 - b. On a river with motor cruisers & everything
 - c. Looking for the next buoy and wondering whether it was port or starboard
 - d. Thinking about where to stop for your picnic

Scores a) .75 b) 2 c) 3 d) 4

2. How do you normally get your boat to your destination?
 - a. Towed by a support boat; we don't want to wear the big genoa out
 - b. Sailing with a good bout of tacking
 - c. Sails up, but with an engine for when the wind drops
 - d. Crew take it round under engine one evening during the week

Scores a) 2 b) 4 c) 3 d) .75

3. To invite them on a sailing weekend, what are you most likely to offer your crew:
 - a. A dry berth and a pork pie
 - b. A bed on a motor boat
 - c. A pint and a curry
 - d. A lift from the clubhouse

Scores a) 4 b) 2 c) 3 d) .75

4. Speaking of berths; how long is your longest?
 - a. Long enough for our helm to sleep comfortably (extra point if they're over

6ft)

- b. Recently deepened to accommodate a growing child
- c. A decent length, but the mattress has gone AWOL
- d. Big enough to fit the topsail & spar

Scores a) 3 b) 4 c) .75 d) 2

5. Where do you store your beer/wine to keep it cool?

- a. In the boat's fridge/cool box
- b. In the club house bar
- c. On our support vessel
- d. In the bilges

Scores a) 3 b) 2 c) .75 d) 4

6. What does your summer sailing itinerary usually look like?

- a. We go on an extensive cruise each year to foreign parts
- b. Regatta hopping takes us to most events on the East Coast
- c. Racing round our local river/estuary with the occasional foray to a nearby regatta
- d. Frequent trips to favourite spots on the Butley River or the Blackwater (whichever is further away)

Scores a) 3 b) .75 c) 2 d) 4

7. Where do you usually see your best sunset of the season?

- a. Slaughdon Quay
- b. Walton Backwaters
- c. Anchored near Osea Island
- d. Balcony of the R.H.Y.C

Scores a) 2 b) 4 c) 3 d) .75

8. What was the last thing you dropped overboard?

- a. Rowlocks; repeatedly
- b. Winch handle
- c. Teaspoon whilst emptying the washing up

d. Youngest child

Scores a) 2 b) .75 c) 3 d) 4

9. Best place you've woken up on the water?

- a. Clubhouse jetty after a sailing club Ball
- b. On the mud after a OGA dinner
- c. Anchored, in the cockpit after an afternoon snooze
- d. In your bunk, mid race.

Scores a) 2 b) 3 c) 4 d) .75

10. What's the last thing you got really cross about on your boat?

- a. Shouting for water when you'd managed to get yourself on the wrong side of the committee boat at the start?
- b. Going for a port flyer only to get into stays after being put about by that smug *&% in your rival smack?
- c. Pointing too high to creep round a corner and going aground (extra point if you had to get in the water and push)
- d. Getting to Heybridge Basin too late to get locked in

Scores a) .75 b) 2 c) 3 d) 4

11. What's in the good ship's library?

- a. A heavily annotated copy of Reed's almanac
- b. A recent tide table
- c. The race sailing instructions
- d. Half a dozen bird, flower and dragonfly spotting guides

Scores a) 3 b) 2 c) .75 d) 4

12. Who are the last people you bumped into on the water?

- a. A sistership or friends aboard their own Old Gaffer, on a cruise
- b. The back of the second start
- c. The RHYC Cruising Division drinking gin (or equivalent Smart Set)
- d. The boat on the same handicap as you on starboard

Scores a) 3 b) .75 c) 4 d) 2

If you scored between 9 and 19.5 points

Keen eyed Racer. Are you sure you're having a nice time? You may be in the first start, but you're probably doing less actual sailing than a picnic boat that reaches Stone Point for lunch. For all your luff-tweaking, you could be in danger of missing out on the best of life that the river has to offer.

If you think you'd like to ease yourself back into cruising life, try a trip to somewhere like Walton Backwaters, Brightlingsea Creek, the Swale, or the Crouch for a quiet overnight mooring (pick the nearest). Pack warm clothes, bbq and beer. Test your knowledge of the OGA register and invent clues for the boats you don't know. Read bits out of Almanac to each other.

To make it into the True Gaffer cruiser fleet you're going to need to start towing a dinghy behind you and reaching a head of navigation under your own steam (alright, an outboard for the really tricky bits). Visit at least one Head of Navigation and don't come back til you can't remember what day it is. Canoe to the pub or beach & BBQ frequently.

If you scored between 19.75 and 48 points

Dyed in the baggy wrinkles Gaff Cruiser. Surely it's time you tested yourself against your peers? Or at least enjoyed some of the conviviality of a regatta? Off the water owners and crews can be some of the most helpful people for problems with your boat. They'll happily talk you through where they put their jib cars, why they went for carbon spars... You might learn something new.

If you fancy a race, perhaps try a gentle regatta. Nothing too aggressive and shouty. Just a little outing round the cans and a good gossip about your boat in the pub/beer tent afterwards. You can cruise there the weekend before if that helps.

To get back up to speed to join the serious Racer fleet, you probably need to start with a full racing programme, (don't try the mixed fleet stuff yet; dinghy racing is a full-contact sport you don't want to get snarled up in). Mug up on the rules, especially water for an obstruction or the mark. Don't be afraid to get your protest flag out and remember big gaffers don't need nearly as much room round the buoy as they think they do. If that sounds like too much, some regattas have cake afterwards.

If the scoring system is up the spout and you're somewhere in the middle...

You're so marvellously well-adjusted you're probably the proud holder of the wooden spoon & some French beers from last year's foreign cruise. Do you have carbon spars to make cruising easier, a folding propellor AND a handicap that's been hardened in the last three years? Probably time you did your penance and stood to organise an OGA event for your local area.

Backstay

This is a Newsletter, and there are a couple of bits of news to finish with. That well known winner of races *Fanny of Cowes* has been sold, and will be leaving the area at the end of this season. No worries though, as she has gone to a long time member of the OGA who will doubtless look after her well.

The committee has been notified that Nick Ennion, who joined the OGA in 2004, died in January. I have no other details to pass on but would like to hear from anyone who would be willing to write a few words about him.

As normal this is the only issue that will be printed and sent out to all the Area members. The May, August, and November issues will be available to read online or download in colour pdf form from the website at the start of the dated month. They remain available there indefinitely, and if you wish to read back issues there is a complete run available from the January 2008 issue.

If you would like to receive printed copies of all issue please fill in the form included in this mail out and return it to me by the middle of April so I know how many copies I need to get printed. There is a charge of £3 for this, towards the cost of printing and postage. This has remained the same for the last 5 years, and it was suggested by one of the users of the service that £5 might be better, giving the possibility of a bank note rather than a cheque which would be easier to process. This change was not put forward at the AGM, so the price remains the same, but if anyone wishes to voluntarily increase their payment I will make sure that any excess goes to Area funds.



Traffic on the Norfolk Broads

Sue Lewis

Eastcoaster is a members' newsletter, and as such it relies on contributions from the members. If you have any news you wish to share, reports of events you have been to, stories about your boats, or pictures, then please get in touch with me at alison.margaret.cable@gmail.com, or through the post to 146 Stortford Hall Park, Bishop's Stortford, Herts, CM23 5AP.

I hope you have enjoyed this issue, and look forward to your contributions to the next one, which should reach me by 24th April.

Alison Cable. Eastcoaster editor