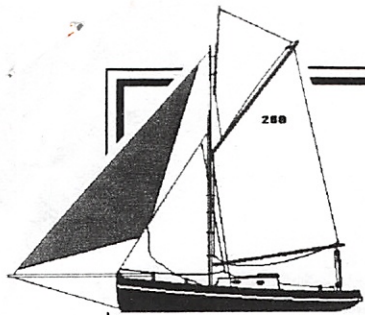




EASTCOASTER

No 32, AUGUST 1998 SPONSORED BY FOX'S



EAST COAST OLD GAFFERS RACE

18 JULY WEST MERSEA

Secretary's report

Although the elements were against us, the Fox's East Coast Old Gaffers Race was a cracking event both ashore and afloat. Force 6 winds on the Friday stopped many of the 80 plus entries getting to Mersea, but the Force 4/5 Westerly on Saturday morning gave nearly 50 large gaffers and 18 small gaffers an exciting start.

The course for the big boats involved a run and a broad reach out to the Wallet Spitway out at sea, a beam reach back to the Jaywick shore, a beat out again to Colne Bar, against the tide as well; a reach up the Colne Estuary to Inner Bench, then a close fetch to the Bench Head, followed by a beat back up the Blackwater Estuary to finish off West Mersea.

The run out to sea generally went to plan, the strong ebb mitigating the freshening wind, encouraging the setting of larger down wind sails. It also enabled some of the heavier craft such as the smacks *Blackbird*, *Ostrea Rose* and the *1808 Boadicea* to get a move on. The gybe at Wallet Spitway needed some care, and Colne Gaffer Salting was unfortunately dismasted. There was still a lot of cross tide running, which needed allowing for on the Jaywick leg. Some boats such as Yarmouth Shrimper *Crangon*, RNLI *Stadats* and the little *Cygnat* found themselves down tide and down wind of the mark. Their plight was noted by the next group, who made due allowance!

It was a fascinating albeit fearful sight to witness the fast group reaching across the sea to Jaywick. The mighty steel cutter *Noorderzon* carrying everything that could be set, including her huge masthead genoa and topsail, the prawner *Laura* under more modest reefed main and green overlapping staysail travelling at similar speed. Speed was a common factor amongst the group, but design was not! Amongst the heavy weights such as smacks *Sunbeam*, *Charlotte Ellen*, *Ethel Alice*, *Good Intent* and *Bona* we had the likes of the racers, such as *Spellbound*, *Asti* 6 Metre and ECODS *Redshank* and *Chittabob*.

Working the shallows off the Jaywick shore on a still falling tide was difficult in the conditions, but really was the only option for smaller boats to avoid being swept out of the race. *Firefly*, the canoe yawl being sailed by just a man and wife team, started to show her pedigree on this stretch, and made a fine board to round the Colne Bar. The leg up to Inner Bench Head was a good one too for the smack *Hyacinth*, showing a welcome return to form after many years, whilst the cockler *Alice and Florrie* was enjoying her best OG race ever. From Bench Head home was pure slog in a rapidly increasing wind. Smaller vessels such as *Celtic Witch*, *Sunshine*, *Mistress*, *Moonstone* and *Dirty Girty* survived through their wits and skill of their crews. *Bona* meanwhile held on

EAST COAST CLASSICS ON TOUR 1998

Well, it might not have been the biggest Classic Boat Festival, but it was certainly the best, by far! Linked in with Southwold and Maritime Ipswich, hosted by Haven Ports Yacht Club and supported by stalwart Eastcoasters, the event was a new dawn for the Classic Boat Festival..

For most of us, the start of the classics was Southwold. The fresh breeze from the West gave boats from the South a superb reach up the coast. Nearly 20 boats completed the OGA type passage race sponsored by Harbour Marine Services, where the average speeds of boats on passage, taking into account tides, size of boat etc. forms the finishing order. There were some impressive entries showing a good standard of log keeping on passage. The 1860 Bawley *Good Intent's* log was particularly well presented, and indeed she was the first smack too. The first racer was the West Solent *Mischief*, whilst third was *Gromit* on 5.68 kn. Second, on her maiden voyage under gaff rig (for 50 years), was the 1937 Morecambe Bay Prawner *Maryll* on 5.76 kn. However the real achievement was the Itchen Ferry (replica) *Merlyn III's* passage of 6.4 knots, a fantastic speed for a 22ft boat, and her first ever win in a major event!

At the entrance to Southwold Harbour (cont. page 4)



to her topsail, and the Itchen ferry yacht *Fearnought* looked relatively at ease. Her only worry was the "Bad Intentions" of a bawley on the give-way tack, but fortunately the rules of the road were applied in both practice and effect, despite the brinkmanship! At either end of the age ranges of traditional boats in action, the 1808 *Boadicea* and the 1937 prawner *Maryll* raced neck and neck for the line under all plain sail. *Boadicea's* firm sections held her upright, whilst on *Maryll* cries of "how much longer" were heard, as beer supplies became increasingly difficult to locate in the 3 feet of water swilling round her bilge.

Laura took line honours (Britannia Trophy and Tom Bolton), followed by *Spellbound* (Stone), *Noorderzon* (Sheave) and *Asti* (East Coast Old Gaffers).

The Open Boats Race was held in the Blackwater Estuary, using WMYC marks, on a shortened course. The fleet had been split into Alpha and Beta classes, the Alpha's consisting in the main of the Mersea racing Brigs. The big 22ft Oyster Bumpkin *Vendetta* had the best race with line honours, although she lost out on handicap to *Wanderer* and *Joanne*. The 12SqM Sharpie *Ula* gave the local brigs a fright, coming second over the line. All who completed deserve congratulations, but of worthy of mention is *Hush*, who beat the local hot shot *Native* over the line. In the Beta class the indefatigable *Visge Bertha* won the Alpha Pitt trophy from *Xebeque* and *Boston II*.

The prizegiving and social in the evening was possibly the best yet, much of the spirit and goodwill of the classic boat festival spilling over (although not too much beer was spilt). We even had a rendering of the OGA anthem, "Ticky Tacky". John Munns, Manager of Fox's at Ipswich presented the prizes, with George Jago officiating on behalf of the OGA. In events such as this, there are a large number of people who contribute to the success of the

FOX'S EAST COAST OLD GAFFERS RACE PRIZE WINNERS



EAST COAST OLD GAFFERS TROPHY

STONE TROPHY

SHEAVE TROPHY

BRITANNIA & TOM BOLTON

CRUISER & TITHERIDGE

AUSTIN EDGE

BOAT WORLD ROSE BOWL

PUSSERS RUM

DAVEY TROPHY

HUNT TROPHY

OLD HARRY

1 CLASS I

2 CLASS I

3 CLASS I

1 CLASS II

2 CLASS II

3 CLASS II

ZETLAND TROPHY

COCKLE SHELL

ALPHA PITT

PLODDERS POT

ASTI V

SPELLBOUND

NOORDERZON

LAURA

FIREFLY

DIRTY GIRTY

REDSHANK

CHITTABOB IV

HYACINTH

MARYLL

WILLIAM

ETHEL ALICE

FEARNOUGHT

MERMAID

MISTRESS

SUNSHINE

MOONSTONE

WANDERER

JOANNE

VISGE BERTHA

BOSTON II

day. In Fox's we thank Sue Goodchild and John Munns; in West Mersea Yacht Club we thank Tony Sayers, Frank Reed, Don Gamble, the staff, and all those on the committee boat Riis; Phil the Rib, and those who operated the safety boats; the boatmen who ferried us ashore; Sue Taylor for not only her committee work, but all the work on the West Mersea waterfront to make sure all fired on all cylinders; the Jago's for their work on the committee boat and afterwards working out the results; the Aussies for sorting out the prizes; all those on the subcommittee for the evenings given up and their work. And of course, all those who took part!

Next year is a very special year, as the East Coast Race on 17 July 1999 will be a major part of the West Mersea Yacht Club centenary celebrations. And from what I have seen they do

intend to celebrate! Combine it with Europe Week beforehand and North Sea Classic Passage Race for Hel-levoetsluis afterwards, it is going to be a good time to take a holiday!

Jon Wainwright
East Coast Area Secretary

Fox's provided T shirts and chandlery vouchers for all the trophy winners, as well as 4 pints of Adnams for every completed declaration form!

As *Spellbound* was first on corrected time, her skipper Mark Butler becomes Commodore (again) of the East Coast Area until July 1999. Congratulations Mark!

For those who would like full result details and overall corrected time order, please send me an SAE.

OPEN BOATS RALLY SEPTEMBER 5

Eastcoaster is pleased to report that Race Officer Sue Taylor (38-28-43) has now been located, following the launch of her West Solent *Blackadder* last week. Boatbuilder Peter Brookes (19) has been released from the Heybridge stocks on bail, as the bilges are still dry, subject to the vessel winning both Mersea and Burnham Weeks outright. As reported exclusively in the last Eastcoaster she will be running the Open Boats Race & Rally at West Mersea on Saturday September 5th from Dabchicks SC, start at 1100. There are excellent facilities for launching and parking of vehicles, trailers, boats etc.. There will be supper (prepared by Mersea haute cuisine specialist Sue- I -do -the Cooking -too Taylor) and prizegiving at 1800. The entrance fee will be a fiver, cheques payable to the OGA. Tel Sue on 01206 38-28-43 for queries. Send the tear off strip on page 5 to 10 Brickhouse Close, West Mersea, Nr Colchester Essex. CO5 8LA.

(Sung at the Classic Boat Festival & EC Race)

LITTLE BATHTUBS

- To the tune of Pete Seeger's "Little Boxes".

Little bathtubs in marinas, little bathtubs made of ticky-tacky,
Little bathtubs at the quayside and the owner in the bar,
There's a white one and a white one and a white one and a white one,
And they're all made out of ticky-tacky and they all look just the same.
And they all have roller-reefing and self-tailing winches,
And they all put a little reef in, in anything above a two.
There's a Jeanneau and a Beneteau and a Moody and a Westerley,
And they're all made out the ticky-tacky and they all look just the same.
And they all have weatherfaxes and global positioning,
And a radar and a little screen that helps you to plot,
There are gadgets and gizmos which show where the wind blows,
And the skipper is just a passenger 'cos the autohelm does the lot!
And the owners are all builders or accountants or solicitors,
And they all drive down from Loughton on a Friday afternoon,
And they slip into their blazers and their Henri-Lloyd moccasins,
For an evening at the yachty-clubby and they all look just the same.
And the owners all have wifeys who hate to go sailing,
Except around the Greek Islands where they get a good tan.
And they all sit in Marinas and drink up their G and T's,
And they all come out of Billericay and they all look just the same.
And they all have little children who love to go sailing,
But they're all sent away to boarding school where they never get a chance,
So they read their Arthur Ransome and dream of Great Voyaging,
In a pretty little wooden cutter, off to Holland or France.
Little Bathtubs in marinas, little bathtubs on a swinging mooring,
Little Bathtubs at the quayside and the owner in the pub,
There's a Jeanneau and a Beneteau and a Moody and a Westerley,
And they're all made out of ticky-tacky and they all look just the same.

(There's an equally rude version going round marinas about rotten wooden boats etc so be careful when & where you break into song!)

As the season for mega-festivals an regattas gets into full swing, many of owners of gaff rigged boats (especially the



smackies) have a bewildering choice of events to attend. The charecterful craft we sail do have a tremendous appeal (unless you are getting one surveyed or trying to sell her), which event organisers capitalise on. To be feted in such a way must be very flattering, but you have to beware that the event organisers' interests are not the same as the OGA's are when they stage an event. A regatta like Mersea Week might be a pretty safe bet, where many of the people involved are also OGA members or have an interest in classic boats. However the same can not be said for the majority of commercial festivals, where often we are herded into an under-used dock with a brace of portaloos and beer in plastic glasses, and punters are charged £15 a head to gorp at us. Despite the raz-ma-taz and hype, they are not the East Coast Classics on Tour, more for the exhibitionist than the genuine gunk-holing eastcoaster! However, although I have not had anything to do with it myself, I'm very pleased indeed that the OGA has at least managed at Portsmouth International Festival of the Sea to instigate an element of sailing activity. Full marks to those involved. Coupled with a trip to Cowes and the Solent Race (120 entrants?)as well, it should be a good time. It is a good step in the right direction, and let's hope it all goes so well that future commercial events will follow Portsmouth's lead, and use the OGA's expertise.

Anyway, I am intending to swallow part of my corinthian pride, and take Maryll back to Portsmouth, her port of registry in 1950 when she was converted to a yacht. Perhaps I can write an Eastcoaster's guide to surviving the Solent. That's if I can survive the mooring charges, the protocol, the persistant Souwester and the demons that start at Dover. Wish us fair winds, or you will have to put up with us at Mersea!

Jon Wainwright E C Secretary

Portview, New Rd, Mistley, CO112AE tel 01206 39-35-37

PS For those wondering what is happening to Euro champ Deva, she intends to fit out for October - May. For those who lay up, but still want a sail in the winter, let me know.

*Don't forget to prepare
your Logs accounts of
great voyages etc. for the
Francis B Cooke Trophy,
for the AGM in November!*

there was a very warm welcome, with the Harbour Master coming alongside with gifts from the local brewery.

The next day saw classic boatmen and smackies touring the beautifully maintained traditional Adnams Brewery in the Town. Adnams hospitality extended also to sponsoring the Sole Bay Race in the afternoon, a case of Broadside apiece. This race was held in fairly stiff south-west winds off the town seafront. Again there was a good entry, everyone well into the spirit of the event. Many underestimated the strength of the tide and were well shy of the start line, but most completed the course. Bawley *Bona*, Folkboat *Beagle* and West Solent *Mischief* took the first 3 places, but there were good performances from *Ostrea Rose* and *Blackbird* too.

And the dawn heralded another passage race (with more cases of Broadside for prizes), as boats headed south for Ipswich. The wind was on the nose, a thirty mile beat to windward. Craftiest was *Vashti*, who noted that we had not set an outer limit mark (other than Ijmuiden), and laid down the coast in one tack. *Vashti*'s craftiness paid off to take first place, but second was *Stella La Vie en Rose* from West Mersea and third was *Beagle* from Southwold. Bawley *Bona* won the Pauls Cup for first gaffer.

Saturday dawned (no, not again on *Vashti*) in Ipswich Wet Dock. Vice President Brian Hammet was soon on form with the public address system, and attention was soon focused on the smack *Polly*. *Polly* was the last Maldon smack to work without an engine, and was being rigged by her owners Mandy & Bob. A joint advisory deputation of the Colne Smack Preservation Society and the Sailing Smack Association headed by president Colin Swindale was rejected in favour of a Stour S C one to rig *Polly*, suitably sponsored by Adnams in full view of Tolly's Brewery (hint).

After a mayoral inspection of the fleet, with hospitality on *Velsheda* and *Bad Intentions*, *Polly* did indeed win the Concourse d'élégance, with *Beagle* picking up a prize for the cleanest of bilges.

Entertainment in the Wet Dock featured a mock sea battle, with lots of cannon fire and water bomb throwing. Apparently the British Army and the IRA went on full alert, wondering what the explosions were about!!!! Dragon Boats were racing, some of the little gaffers were sailing up and down the dock. There were fireworks in the evening and a band at Orwell Quay.

Monday morning saw the fleet locking out of the Wet Dock with the square riggers and Malcom Miller, to assemble off the Orwell Bridge for the start of the Pennyhole Bay Race.

Out at sea there was a good old slog to windward against a stiff west wind and tide, quite a little battle developing between the *Stella La Vie en Rose*, Folkboats *Beagle* and

Skandale, Buchannan *Patica*, Canoe yawl *Snippet* and prawner *Maryll*. Further ahead ECOD *Redshank* fought with *M A Solitude*, whilst in the lead hotshot *Rising Hope* just held out against *Vashti*. On Corrected Time *Rising Hope* won the Nancy Oldfield Cup, Beagle the Bona trophy, M A Solitude second, Maryll third, SMM Mountaineering providing Trax prizes.

The fleet moored up off Stone Point, and patent catering equipment sponsored by Good Intent Trading Supplies (NZ) Ltd was put to good use as a barbecue.

The next day brought the usual June grey skies and another stiff breeze. Radio 4 went aboard *Stadats* to record the start of the Swallows and Amazons Race. This is the event for open boats of all shapes and sizes. The course is a 5 mile circuit round the several islands and creeks which comprise the Walton Backwaters, the real Arthur Ransome.

Good starts were made by *Gone for a Burton* (Ness Yole), *Dipper* (Gull) and *Cloud 9* (Mirror) as the fleet reached to Island Point. The beat up Hamford Water was very testing in the wind over tide conditions, crews or self bailers having to work very hard indeed. *Gone for a Burton*, reefed and single handed used her long water line to keep in the lead. As the fleet hove into view again as they came out of the Wade into the Twizzle, GFB was still leading but close behind *Dipper* and *Cloud 9* were setting spinnakers neck and neck. On corrected time *Cloud 9* won from *Dipper*.

The big boats race for the Scandinavian Seaways Bells, originally intended to go to Deben Bar and Back, was shortened because of the dismal conditions. *Vashti* and *Rising Hope* had a good old tussle at the head of the fleet, working out the best heading to Stone Banks to get the best from the wind yet have the optimum angle over the foul tide. Round Stone Banks *Bona* set her topsail to power through the fleet, but on rounding the Cork Ledge buoy had to face both wind and tide. The *Beagle* really came into her own, slicing through the head seas, followed by *Skandale*. *Bona* used her leeway to sag off into the mouth of the Harwich harbour, where the ebb from the North gave her a very interesting lee bow effect. A quick tack off the breakwater enabled her to lay the finish in slacker water and take the big Bell on corrected time. Her greater leeway and lesser pointing ability than the hotshots was actually an advantage!

There was another super night ashore at Walton followed by an early start to the Harwich Haven Cup race. The wind was still brisk, but it was sunny for once too! The course involved a triangle out in Pennyhole Bay, then taking the last couple of hours of tide up to Levington on the

River Orwell. *Bona*'s huge topsail was set again, and off she went under a cloud of sail, worrying the hotshots. However, it was also noticeable how the Zeeschow *Roker* was well up the fleet, just setting staysail and main. The Canoe Yawl *Snippet* was also showing her paces, Daughter Bushell determined to show Father Bushell (previous owner) that the boat went just as well (gaff points winner 1997) in the hands of the new generation! With the traditional passenger ferry "Waverley" coming down the river, just for a moment we had a real scene of 60 years ago.

Bona, coming only a couple of minutes behind *Vashti* and *Rising Hope*, took the Harwich Haven Cup, whilst *Roker*'s magnificent performance won her a years sub to Practical Boat Owner. *Snippet* was third from *Moonstone*, whilst Beagle was first Bermudan.

Berthing at Levington was handled very efficiently, which was as well in the conditions. A computer screen was found and the OGA Bunker team was able to get to work on the backlog of administration. A new event newspaper "The Grizzle" (or definitely not the Shitley Spot) was created, the beer tent was rigged, and we were all set for a good time ashore. Initial queries on the handicapping were soon dampened with a bold display of the "Pain in the Ass" trophy. The new Director of Music (flown in at vast expense from New Zealand) got into his stride, and soon we were hearing the new OGA anthem "Ticky Tacky". Micheal, Graham, Pete, Greg and Paul provided instrumentation, and with several individual performances as well, we had the best entertainment ever.

Mistley Day saw the fleet started by the Haven Ports Yacht Club line at Levington. It was quite a struggle for the small gaff riggers over the flood tide, but once round Shotley Spit we had the tide with us. The smacks had quite an interesting race, *Dorothy* having a good tussle with *Good Intent*. First over the line was *Rising Hope* (also second on Handicap) followed by *Vashti* and *Redshank*. *M A Solitude*, *Rainbow* and *Beagle* also turned in excellent performances. But the real star was Eric Hushers little *Penache*, although the smallest in the fleet was well up at the finish. Very deservedly she won the race on Handicap and received the Thorn Trophy. Prizewinners also received a copy of Micheal Feather's book on *HMS Amphion*, Nelson's frigate built at Mistley Shipyard.

After another great night in the beer tent, it was time for a very windy Two Rivers Race. Again it was a struggle for the gaff riggers to beat both wind and tide out of the Orwell. The course was up to Holbrook Beacon and back, and there were a few dodges to be played to keep out of the tide on return down the Stour. Once in the Stour it was a gaffers breeze, *Sauntress*,

EAST COAST CLASSICS cont.

Snippet and *Bona* showing their paces particularly. West Solent *Benita* clung on to full sail, as did the Fife *Rosemary*, and they looked really impressive powering down river. However *Beagle* took the Two Rivers Trophy on handicap, being sailed excellently as always, followed by *Rosemary* and *Benita*. Merlin Press provided several books as prizes.

In the Open Boats event, held off Levington, *Dipper* held off *Kalymera* to win a very blustery race.

So finally the classics drew to a close; 10 races had been held in several different locations, despite the weather being pretty poor for much of the time. All had participated in good spirit (in both senses of the word!), and it was time for the big prizes for the best performances taken over the week as a whole. The Open Boats Points was won by *Dipper*, winning a Watercraft Subscription. In the Racer class first was *Rising Hope*, followed by *Vashti* and *Redshank*, these boats winning subscription prizes donated by Classic Boat Magazine. In the Bermudan Cruisers, Classic Boat Magazine prizes (as well as the usual OGA mugs and T-shirts) were won by *Beagle* 1, *M A Solitude* (2), *Skandale* (3). In the Gaff Cruisers and Workboats, Bawley *Bona* won the Cup, second was Canoe Yawl *Snippet* and third was prawnier *Maryll*, all three being awarded Watercraft Subs. The Victor Ludorum was won by *Beagle*, her placing in the Concourse D'elegance giving her the edge on her rivals. There were many awards for those who had helped.

I would like to thank our Vice President Brian Hammet and his committee, Matt and Stadats crew, HPYC, Suffolk Yacht Harbour, Phil the Rib, Jan Davies of Ipswich BC, SMM Mountaineering (Trax), HMS, Adnams Brewery, Classic Boat Magazine, Watercraft Magazine and Practical Boat Owner, for all their support in what had to be a very hastily conceived event. Book 9 June - 20 June 1999 for the same and better next year!

Jon Wainwright East Coast Area Secretary

MALDON TOWN REGATTA & OGA ANNIVERSARY RALLY 26 SEPTEMBER

For the third year running the OGA are linking up with the Maldon Town Regatta on 26 September for their anniversary. *What anniversary?* - Well way back in the swinging sixties, these chaps from the south coast who had been staging races for gaff rigged boats since 1958 (because no one else would have them) met up with similar types on the East Coast at Maldon Little Ship Club in September 1963 to form "**THE OLD GAFFERS ASSOCIATION**". It was something of a fun /protest movement, totally different from today's classic yacht/ heritage smackie thing. The OGA went on to become world wide, all sorts of people got in on the act in various ways. Many of the yachting establishment whose attitude had caused the formation of the OGA now plead to have the gaffers and classics back. The original objective had been achieved, which is possibly why the membership lost interest in celebrating the anniversary three years ago.

However, for the few who still felt a pilgrimage to Maldon worthwhile, their salvation came in the form of an offer to join up with the Maldon Town Regatta. The new format was a success from the start. The regatta committee, working with very limited resources, produced a fine show ashore with food for the participants as well. A good sail up from West Mersea on the tide to Osea, where the fleet reformed to create a Parade of Sail, were the hall marks of a successful event which Maldon now looks forward to every September. *And of course, the faithful still toast "The Old Gaffers Association" in the Maldon Little Ship Club.*

There are two races to enter; the first is a race starting at West Mersea Ness at 0930 hrs Saturday 26 September, the second race follows as a Parade of Sail from Osea to Maldon. At Maldon Little Ship Club there is meal laid on (1900hrs) for boat crews and by way of entertainment there's folk music in the MLSC or rock at the Queen's Head. We plan to toast the OGA at about 1730, depending on how the berthing goes. For open boats there is exhibition from the Hythe Quay prior to the big boats berthing. Berthing is included with the entrance fee. We hope to provide a prize for almost every one! *Collect course instructions Victory Pub Friday night before 2130.*

The regatta entry fee is £5.00. (This does not include anything for the OGA itself, but a donation would be nice!) For those who want to protest, there is a fee of £25.00 per protest. Meals are £9.00 per head, payable with entry. Cheques payable to OGA. Please send form and money to me by 12 September

MALDON RALLY to :Jon Wainwright Portview New Rd Mistley Essex CO11 2AE

BOAT NAME & No _____ SAIL COLOUR _____ HULL COLOUR _____
 TYPE _____ No of MEALS @ £9 ☐ ENTRY £5 Donation OGA ☐ TOTAL £ ☐
 NAME ADDRESS & TEL. _____

OPEN BOATS RALLY to Susan Taylor 10 Brickhouse Close West Mersea ESSEX CO5 8LA

BOAT & No _____ TYPE _____ LOA _____ SAIL COL. _____
 HULL COL _____ MERSEACAP PY if known _____ MEAL Nos (to help cook plan) ☐
 NAME ADDRESS & TEL _____ **£5.00**



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