

EASTCOASTER

ISSUE 68

OCTOBER 2006

END- OF-SEASON PARTY (& AGM!) 11 November Brightlingsea

The End-of- Season Party and AGM is all set for Saturday 11 November at the Colne Yacht Club, Brightlingsea.

It is also a rally for those who are still sailing, and berths are available at discount. The idea is to have the AGM from 6 until 8, then have the social. Do bring your non-member friends along, they are very welcome to join us after the meeting, it doesn't matter what boats they sail. The Party is open to all those who are interested in gaff rig and traditional boats, whether OGA members or not.

There are hot meals available, but as it is out of season, the caterers do really need to have an idea of numbers, so please let Denise Rawlinson know if you are likely to come, telephone 01621 783969. There will also be goodies to buy for Christmas

including our special Christmas Cards by Claudia Myatt. Sales of these go towards our hard pressed funds.

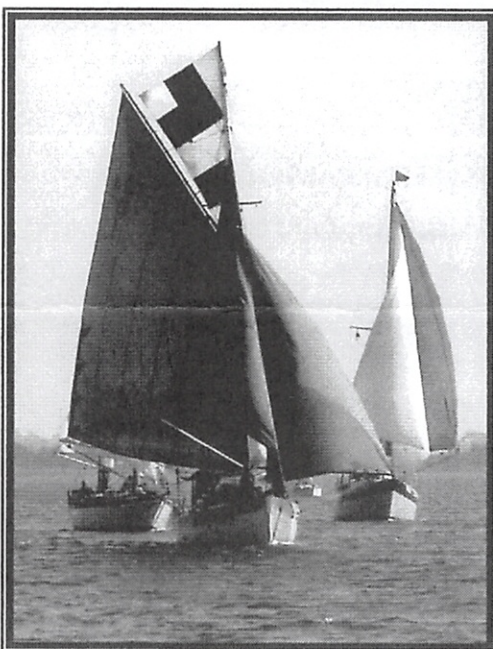
On the business side we

this is the time to discuss them. On a lighter note we will have the Tom Felgate Memorial Points Series Cup for the best overall performance in the racing during the year, and the Francis B Cooke Trophy for the best Log and account in 2006. We also have two other categories for Logs and accounts, see elsewhere.

I have had no notice of resignation from any of committee, but if anyone would like to come on board with us, there is no limit on numbers, and we would be very pleased to have your help.

We meet about six times a year at Stour Sailing Club at Manningtree, and get through a lot of business in a very cordial way. Let me know if you would be willing, if you can.

We look forward to seeing you all there!



are going to discuss the future of the East Coast Old Gaffers Race as a special item, as well as the 2007 generally. If you have any thoughts or ideas on events in the programme or new events,

LOG COMPETITION- NEW RULES

Logs /accounts should be sent to Rob Williamson by November 5* if possible, to give the panel time to make their deliberations. This year the categories of log are to be harmonised with the national Log Competition. The idea is that we will send your Logs on to OGA Central's representative (which happens to be me) and enter them into the National Competition. You might win two prizes this way. Or if you don't win on the East Coast, you might win with the national judges!

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USE IT OR LOSE IT!

AGENDA ITEM 6

What are we going to do about the East Coast Old Gaffers Race?

Why have so many of you stopped coming to it?

What do we have to do to put the event back at the top of the sailing events calendar?

Have your say at Brightlingsea on November 11!

LOG COMPETITION cont.

Just to remind you, the categories are as follows:

A/ Full Log, with illustrated account, charts and deck log.

B/ Cruising account of 1000 words max, suitable for publication in the Gaffers Log.

C/ Young Persons (under 18) account or log – no rules.

You don't have to have done a World Presidential Tour of the Baltic. (Though I expect an entry

from him!) It can be a week on the East Coast such as a Log of the August Classics Cruise. It's the quality that counts. In category A particularly we need to the route marked on a chart or chartlet, the deck log with the usual technical information and comments, and the account is the story part, illustrated with photographs or sketches. If you have prepared the account on computer file, we would like to put it on the web site, if it is fine with you.

We have the Francis B Cooke Trophy and the Avola cruising Cup, plus a new one for category C. But remember, whether your account is a prize-winner or not, it becomes part of the boat's history, and is very important for her that you do one!

Rob Williamson's address is:

Brick Kiln Cottage, Coggeshall Road, Great Tey, CO6 1 AG.
Telephone 01206 211318.

Notice of ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**EAST COAST AREA OF THE OLD GAFFERS ASSOCIATION
TO BE HELD AT COLNE YACHT CLUB BRIGHTLINGSEA**

6.00 p.m. Saturday 11 November 2006

AGENDA

1. Welcome and address by East Coast Area President
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of 2005 AGM (Previously Circulated)
4. Secretary's Report (Previously Circulated)
5. Treasurer's Report and Accounts
6. East Coast Old Gaffers Race
7. Election of Committee

(There will be a short break for refreshments)

8. Log Competition Awards
9. 2006 Points Series Awards (Tom Felgate Memorial Trophy)
10. 2007 Events Programme
11. 2007 OGA AGM in London
12. Any Other Business

Jon Wainwright, Hon Secretary



PROVISIONAL DIARY DATES 2007

STEALTH

10 MARCH	DINNER AT ROYAL BURNHAM YACHT CLUB*
7/8 APRIL	EASTER RALLY*
5/6/7 MAY	MAYDAY RALLY FOULNESS*
16 JUNE	EAST COAST OLD GAFFERS RACE*
14/15 JULY	SWALLOWS & AMAZONS, WALTON BACKWATERS*
21 JULY	WIVENHOE REGATTA
22-29 JULY	NORTH SEA RACE, ZEELAND CRUISE & DCYR HELLEVOETSLUIS
4 AUGUST	SWALE MATCH
18-27 AUGUST	AUGUST CLASSICS*
29 SEPT.	MALDON TOWN REGATTA & OGA ANNIVERSARY RALLY
PMSC SMACKS & GAFFERS- T.B.A.	
RHS HOLBROOK TRAFALGAR RALLY - T.B.A.*	



SECRETARY'S REPORT

Jon Wainwright Hon Sec

It has been a mixed year to report on. Some of it has been disappointing and some of it worrying for the future. However some of it has been very enjoyable, and there have been some interesting developments.

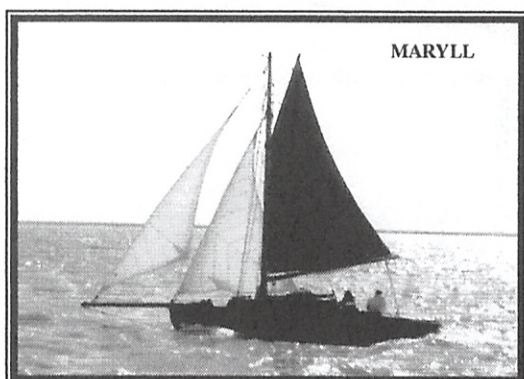
So I can finish on a happier note, I will do the bad bits first. We have not had the sponsorship as we had last year at Brightlingsea and Southwold,

which was worth about £2500 to us. Furthermore we actually lost money for the first time on our flagship event, the East Coast Old Gaffers Race. Central (your subscriptions in part) funding in terms of postage for newsletters and the capita payment has mitigated the situation, but had it not been for better than expected receipts on two events, we would have been eating very deeply into our reserves. Some of our programme, either because of the type of event or because we are tagged on to another body's event do not generate income to cover administration costs. I expect the accounts will show a healthy balance still, but there is a worrying underlying trend.

The East Coast Old Gaffers Race, the race that started our area in 1963, was well run this

year, and we had good weather. But entry levels were far from good compared with a few years ago. I know a lot of people say there are too many other events etc., but funnily enough we are getting rising entry levels at our other newer events, such as the RHS Holbrook event and the August Classics. More of you ought to have made the effort to support the Old Gaffers race. The Committee has looked at this situation deep and hard, and if there is anything we have done over the years which has caused the East Coast Race to lose its appeal as the main traditional craft event on the East Coast. We have some ideas of bringing back some of the features, which set it aside from other events, and to restore its unique image.

The logistics and demographics of running the East Coast Old Gaffers

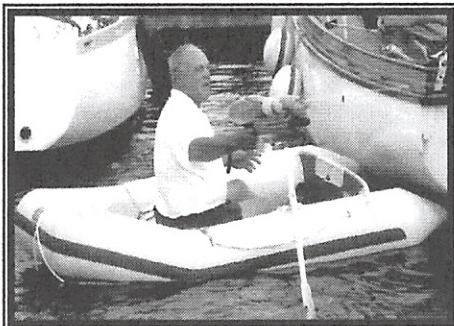


More Information and Pictures on eastcoastoldgaffers.co.uk !

Sec's Report

Race compared with even ten years ago have changed considerably. There are no longer sailing centres available to us in July, because there are too many other yachts about. A lot of the people who used to race have dropped out through the ravages of time, and have not been replaced by younger people taking up gaff sailing. Some groups of gaffers, such as smacks and MFOB's have formed their own organisations and prefer to sail as a class. And as reported earlier, there are often cases where we clash with other events deemed to be similar.

We may have to accept that whatever we do we may never see again the great East Coast Old Gaffers Race Fleets of the past. However it is the intention of the committee not to scale back the event to just another rally. It will continue to be our flagship event, the unique race on the coast open to all types of gaff rigged craft. The one race every gaff rigged craft ought to take part in. And more members of the East Coast Area



really ought to make the effort.

The East Coast Old Gaffers Race is the one race we have to put on each year, as does every other area, it is in our rules. But on the East Coast we do a lot of non-“constitutional” races and rallies. The RHS event at Holbrook and Wrabness, which included a visit and meal at the Royal Hospital School, a race and a barbecue was a great success again. As was the Swallows and Amazons Event at Walton Backwaters, for open boats, despite a very stiff breeze. The August Classics Cruise, however, broke new levels of enjoyment. Meeting up at Ipswich really got the party going, and it kept going right to the last day. It was so nice to see the range of age groups and dogs getting on so well with each

other. And the racing despite the informality of the occasion was great. All three of these events were also notable for participation by younger people, a welcome change in trend compared with most sailing events, gaffers or otherwise. So we are getting something right!

Behind the scenes the committee have been busy on several fronts. Meetings held at Stour Sailing Club have been very congenial, but they have also been productive. We have been more proactive on publicity, and we might soon see a feature in Classic Boat about us, first for a very long time! We have been looking at ways of trying to encourage more membership, with a trial membership scheme. We have been making progress with a boat register on our website. Of course we have to be careful not to step on Central toes with such initiatives and we do consult!

Communication with such a scattered membership has always been an expensive and time consuming task in such an active area as ours. We have several deadlines during the year to meet with Eastcoaster, and between the time the last information comes in and when it goes out in the post there is a big struggle, and occasionally a mistake or two creeps in, for which I apologise.

Our other growing means of communication is the website. Rising costs of postage, the destruction of trees to produce paper and development of communications hardware will no doubt make this the main means of communication for organisations like ours in years to come. All members who are able should check our east coast website regularly. There is a lot of information, much more than Eastcoaster, it is updated frequently (over 80 updates this year) and the gallery is quite spectacular in range and content. If you want an entry form or sailing instructions for an event, most times you will see them there first. If you want detail results of races, that's where you need to look. If you want to sell something, all the details can be shown. If you have a nice picture or article, that can be slotted in too. I can tell by the ranking on search engines that it is one of the most looked at gaffer sites. We have recently added a second

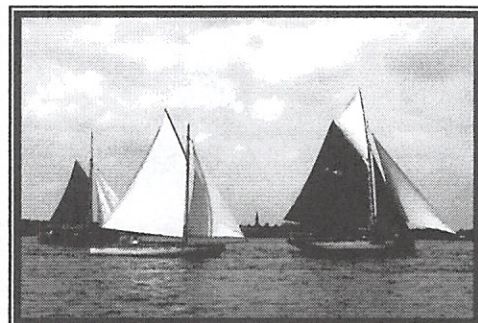
domain name “eastcoastoldgaffers.co.uk” so it is even more obvious! The website is also our public face, so it is impor-



tant we do our best, and that includes the membership as a whole. So please mail me your photos and any information, it all helps to show what an active organisation we are.

Whilst on website matters, there are continuing developments at Central Level. With my sailing subcommittee hat on, I have sent reports in concerning the national boat register, I have also forwarded ideas on a web based database to cover this and other aspects of the organisation, supported by more expert contribution by individual members, for which I thank them. Whether or when Central will action such recommendations I am still uncertain!

Still on Central issues, the East Coast Area submitted proposals for a “trial” membership initiative- we (Basically Mike Robertson) made a start on this as a pilot project. Unfortunately with problems (due to injury!) with a Log not coming out, we have not been able to get on with this as well as we had hoped, but no doubt we will be making more progress next year. Yet another example how the East Coast continues to drive the agenda forward for the benefit of all OGA members, not just its own. Although we are a traditional boat organisation,



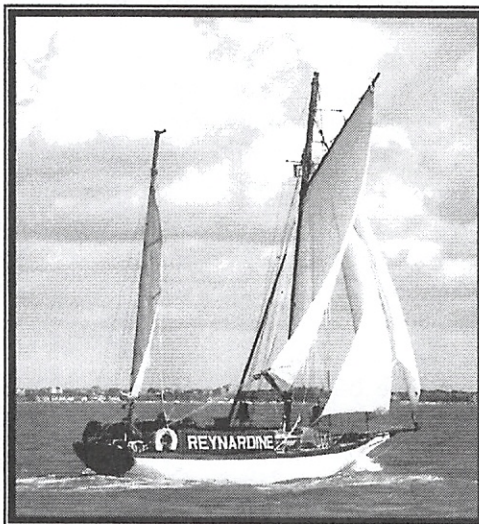
we can't stand still, there are a lot of competing interests for traditional boating public's attention. We need also to maintain and raise the profile of our type of sailing to attract more of the general boating public, to show there is a worthwhile and enjoyable alternative to monotonous modern white plastic boating, promoted so much by the yachting establishment and media.

As well as new initiatives, we still have to do the basic administration well. Not an easy task for a club organisation with no premises and minimal subscription income. However, having been to many non OGA events over recent years, I think we compare

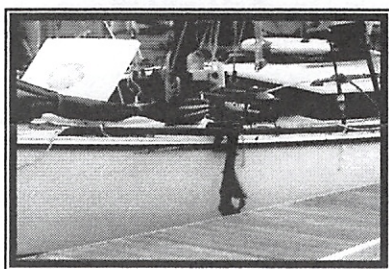
very well in terms of variety, interest and race management. We try to provide a high standard of event information, we try to set reasonable courses within the constraints of location and tide, we provide results, lots of good quality prizes and event reports. Very rarely indeed do I see an equivalent organisation or club match our standards. But there is no organisation "equivalent to the East Coast OLD G AFFERS!"

I end my report by thanking my fellow committee members and others who put in so much work during the year, and were so pleasant

to work with. I also want to thank all the members whom I have seen at events, and made my own membership such a pleasure.



OGA TO BAN BOWTHRUSTERS?



Although many modern yachts and ships are built with bow-thrusters, the Old Gaffers Association is considering banning them under special prescription to the International Racing Rules of Sailing. They are very noisy and cause problems to

other vessels in lock chambers. A particularly unsightly example was spotted by the Chairman of the Sailing Subcommittee in Ipswich Wet Dock, OGA World Presidential Port. The skipper (Pete the Knife) of the offending vessel (Itchen Ferry Reverie) was told to remove it whilst racing. An investigation will be undertaken to see if indeed this is common practice in other OGA areas (e.g. Solent), but a proposal to ban bow-thrusters will be put forward at the next meeting of the Sailing Subcommittee, with a view to formal ratification by the OGA GMC (Politburo).

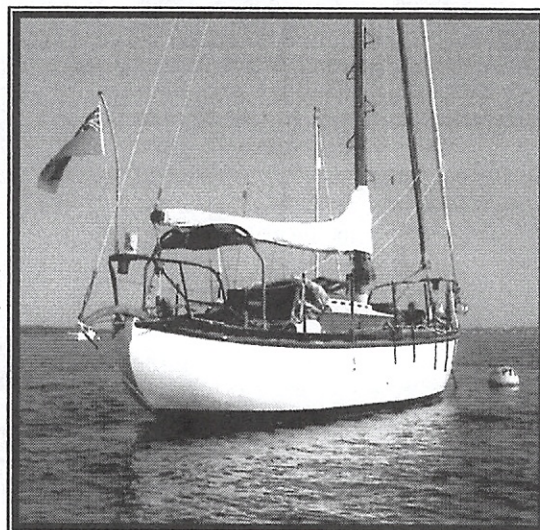
Long before bow thrusters were invented, the traditional gaff cutter was able to back her staysail whilst tacking through the wind. With a straight stemmer and deep forefoot, as found on many smacks, it is best to keep the staysail aback until the vessel is on her new course. The backed staysail is also very useful for providing a lee for setting and lowering flying jibs, which is something a bow-thruster can not do. (PTK told me this?)

The proposed ban only applies to motorised bow-thrusters. Manual versions such as boat hooks, sculling oars and long legs on the foredeck will still be permitted.

Mackenzie Shipping Co News.

The Derbyshire (somewhere on the East Coast?) Branch Office of MSL reports that Stuart and Tessa (Shipping Line Heiress) Hodgkinson have bought a new boat Charity to replace the smack yacht Merlin. Built as recently as 1912, this will be the most modern ship in the fleet. She is 30'LOA x 9.25' beam with 5' draft, built of pitch pine planking on oak frames at the yard of Ashton and Kilner, designed by Ahston, similar lines to an Alert

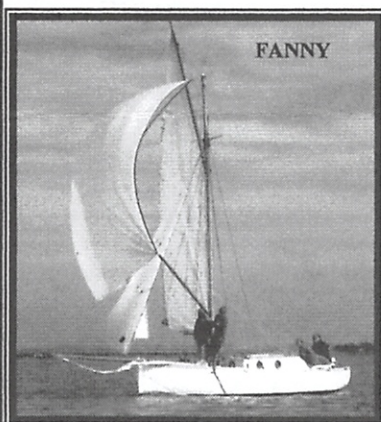
Strange type. She has 5 berths in two cabins, BMC Diesel and full cruising gear. The only omission, as Tessa points out, is a piece of wood in the mainsail. However her internal views indicate that she will be a superb cruiser for the growing MSL personnel, and despite that missing piece of wood she looks a good sailer too.



BRIGAFF 06 & EAST COAST OLD GAFFERS RACE

Although the weather during the week appeared to herald the usual collection of icebergs off Colne Point, and apparently discourage many of you lesser mortals from taking part, the sun actually shone on the East Coast for the weekend and a good time could be had by all!

Prior to the weekend was the Passage Race from home ports to Brighlingsea, a test of passage planning and working tides, rather than pure boat speed. The vessel with the best average speed on passage wins, and this year it was won by the Buchanan designed ketch Reynardine, out of Walton, despite suffering a massive toilet failure on passage.



Until the last few years, the East Coast Old Gaffers Race traditionally used the Wallet Spitway as its outer mark, and this year the race organisers were determined this should happen again! Unfortunately the wind was very light from the South East, and there were worries that the course would have to be shortened. However the race officer stuck to his guns, and contingency plans were made to shorten course, using Margaret Jay (de-commissioned fishing vessel) at the head of the fleet, with intermediate radio contact with the harbour commissioners' vessel at the back of the fleet.

It was a beautiful sunny morning off Bateman's Tower in the Colne, with beautiful boats enhancing the scene. The smacks (slightly depleted in number with the Blackwater Match at Osea) were first start at 0800, followed

by the other gaff riggers ten minutes later. In a separate race, but sailing the same course we had the bermudan classics, starting at 0830.

In of a fleet of forty different vessels it is impossible to describe each one individually, although each one merits a description, so lovely a sight they each made. A very unusual new boat on the scene was Crow. She is a gaff ketch, American style with clipper bow, raked unstayed masts, self acting foresail and off-set rotating mizzen mast. Although traditionalists may find that hard to understand, she has a lovely shaped hull and sails like a witch. I think she is a Bolger design, built by her owner Robert Berk, the man who gave us "Dirty Girty" in the past, over the last six or seven years. She quickly joined the head of the fleet with Itchen Ferry Fanny of Cowes, traditional East Coast Yacht Kestrel and the smack Mary. Another new boat to the East Coast scene was the recently restored Skipjack, originally a West Country Tosher, like a small Falmouth working boat, but re-registered in Maldon- she too joined the leaders.

Further down the fleet we had the ex Thames / Erith YC cruiser Kelpie II, in the 1920's as revolutionary as Crow. Still being worked up to full potential, this year she set a topsail. Traditional as traditional goes was Bravore, a Danish Yol, double ended clinker with half sprit rig. Another new boat was the Ashley Butler built smack yacht, Lucie B, Ashley being one of the few boat builders about who builds traditional boats commercially.

In the bermudan classics race, there was a real needle match between the two Vertues, Owendo and Maid of Tessa, led by Rhumba and trailed by Random!

The light headwinds made the going hard for the slower boats as the ebb helped them down to Colne Bar. Once round the Colne Bar it was just about possible to lee bow the young flood, but whether that was the best tactic is difficult to say. It seemed that to dash across the tide into the shallows on the Knoll and work a back

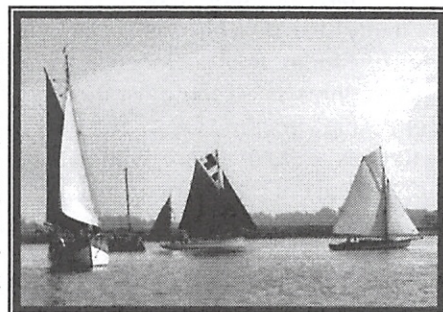
eddy by Swire Hole towards the Spit-



way may have been better than just stemming tide. At this point we had hoped to be in company with the Barges and smacks from the Blackwater Match, but they failed to get further than Bradwell, and even then they had to row, so we hear!

Eventually the leaders made it to Wallet Spitway, Margaret Jay radioing the positions over to race control, before making a dash for the finishing line! The sea breeze had picked up a little (gusting force 2/3?!), giving those who had weathered Wallet Spitway a gentle run and reach home, via the Eagle buoys (what happened to Jaywick Sewage Outfall buoy of years gone by???). Smack Mary was first to cross the line, taking the Britannia trophy, but her class started 10 minutes earlier, and it was Kestrel's time on course was actually faster, even beating the sleek black hulled Crow. Ayesha, smacks Fly and Willam followed, then it was Kelpie having made incredible time from a poor start at the back of the fleet.

Most of the fleet did manage to get round, which was a relief for the organisers, and then it was a race for the most coveted trophy of them all, the Old Harry. The cockler Mary Amelia,



EAST COAST OLD GAFFERS

with a huge jackyard topsail and massive reacher (bastard) that must surely have strained the sailmaking resources of the whole of Tollesbury, made one of the finest dashes for the line I have seen in the entire history of the Old Gaffers Race, scraping through with 3 minutes to spare. Less successful was Ella Rose who finished after the time keepers had packed up, and had to make do with the Plodders Pot!

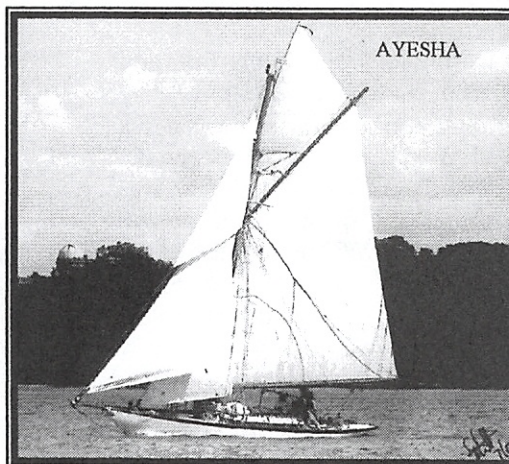
With declarations in, it was time for the results team to get busy, and we were actually finished early! Full details of results will be posted shortly, but Fanny of Cowes won the East Coast Old Gaffers Trophy for the first boat over fifty years old on corrected time. Mary won the Tom Bolton Memorial Trophy, whilst Crow won several prizes including the Titheridge for the first couple sailing on their own (Matey didn't

count!) and a prize for the newest boat.

Sunday morning saw the judges out in force, seeking out a suitable winner for the Concourse D'elegance. This they judged to be Ella Rose, Bonify winning second prize. In afternoon we had the start of the Class 3 Race off Bate-man's Tower, while the remaining fleet gathered off Brightlingsea Quay in readiness for the Parade of Sail. There was some concern that lead boat Reynardine, which had been one of the slower boats of the fleet would not be fast enough to keep ahead, but actually it was the best drilled Parade I have seen. Bonify reefed her main, whilst others played all sorts of tricks with scandalised gaffs etc.. Reynardine had to wind in her headsail, and with judicious use of the bucket and brailing the mizzen from time to time kept reasonable station. The fleet went through the barrier in front of Wivenhoe, before returning to moor at the yacht club pontoons. Wivenhoe had laid on an excellent hog roast for the gaffers, and we had a prize giving for Class 3 open boats and quite a party ashore, before returning to Brightlingsea.

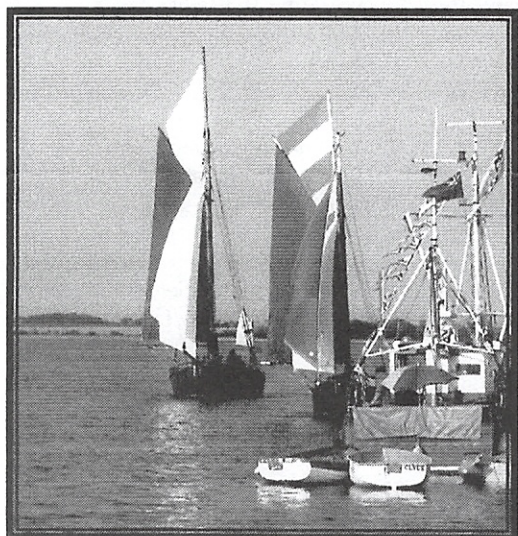
The Monday foray to Bradwell for lunch was only partially successful, as the

strong SW wind held back the tide. Only the shoal draft boats could



enter in time for lunch! Never mind, we had a marvellous sail in the evening on Pioneer, which was a real experience for us all, sailing such a big ketch. Our thanks go to Brian Kennel and crew for making it such a memorable evening.

So ended Brigaff 06 and the East Coast Old Gaffers Race. Nearly everything had gone to plan, thanks to the hard work of Richard Giles, Rob Williamson and the Aussies. The weather had been kinder than it has in the past, and the participants themselves had made it a really pleasurable occasion.

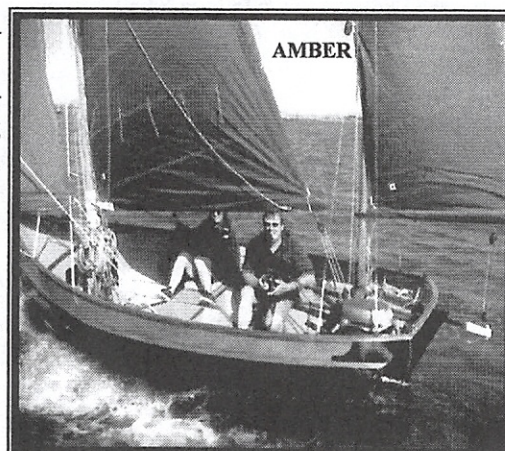


TOM FELGATE MEMORIAL TROPHY—2006 POINTS SERIES

Uniquely the East Coast Area has run a Points Series for Selected Races during a season for some years now. With the variety of races we stage, and the variety of conditions experienced this gives a prizewinning opportunity to the those who turn out regularly for our events and have a good average boat performance. This year the qualifying races were: Crouch Rally, East Coast Old Gaffers Race, the RHS Trafalgar

Rally, Two Rivers Race, Presidents Race and the Maldon Town Regatta & OGA Anniversary Rally. In calculating the results, one "discard" (i.e. the worst race) is allowed, maximum of five races to count.

The Tom Felgate Memorial trophies go to the first three boats. A separate points series is run in parallel for Bermuda Rigged Craft



SWALLOWS & AMAZONS 15/16 July *Tessa Hodgkinson reports*

Derbyshire had been hot and sunny as we left home on Friday afternoon and my mind was full of images of barmy breezes despite the forecast. So it was something of a shock as we drove into Walton and heard the wind howling in the rigging of the boats, and no doubt pulling at the tent pegs of our hardy campers.

However Saturday dawned slightly better, but still with a NE 4 or 5 so after a brief consultation our Race officer, Chris Brooke, sensibly decided to shorten the course and keep the boats in more sheltered waters. Of the 41 boats entered 36 turned up to race, however many decided the conditions were not



for them and wisely stayed ashore.

The fleet left Walton & Frinton Yacht Club soon after half tide and raced down to Stone Point, the local Jewels leading as ever, in what proved to be a fast and lively race. The outward mark was tricky – a jibe mark and with the full force of the wind coming in over the sands. Some boats went for it, others wore round. Just as smacks boat Splice was gaining on Lettuce, Splice jybbed round the mark, broke her tiller and performed a slow but spectacular capsize. She was not the only casualty amongst the smacks boats – there was also loss of a mast, another tiller and an oar. Seventeen hardy little boats made it back from Stone Point, into

the Wade then back up to the club. The fleet was very close, Spinel the remaining Jewel led the fleet, unable to reef she sailed with full sails which was no doubt a little hairy at times, Orca the Mirror and Dido the 1930s steam yacht tender came roaring home together in second and third place. The smallest boat in the race, Peter Pan 2 and Suky, the only scow to complete the course, were both well up the field, coming home with the smacks boats. Drascombe Freya made a stately finale to the race.



visitors who made it round to see her. Prizegiving was followed by dinner at the club and an evening of lively music thanks to the local Onion Band.

Sunday dawned sunny and with a fair breeze. Our friendly bacon butty van turned up and the boat jumble began. This year the sale was twice the size – I just wish I had rushed round the stalls earlier, there were some lovely blocks I just missed. Meanwhile the children were sent off on a sortie to find all sorts of things, Josh Masters completed the task first and won the Pirate.

Back at the club paperboat manufacture was in full swing under the management of the Masters. There was some question whether it was necessary to have any paper in a paper boat – but all had great fun and the fleet were launched from Margaret J's deck across the pond. George and Maddy's Pirates of the Caribbean was first boat home.

Ragged Robin (aka Lottie Blossum), Arthur Ransome's hillyard joined the other OGA yachts in the pond – she is now well cared for by TARS (The Arthur Ransome Soc) so was open to visitors all week end. Nancy Blackett had also planned to join us but due to the weather moored in Titchmarsh, and entertained some

As soon as the mud was covered the fleet took to the water – some were determined sail around the island having been prevented on Saturday. Others were happy to have a leisurely sail down to Stone Point, build



SWALLOWS & AMAZONS 15/16 July (CONT.)

sand sculptures with Julia and the Feathers. Everyone at Stone Point got caught up in the fun and the sculptures included everything from pyramids to mermaids. The best sculptures were judged as the Curlew family's "Map" and Scow ladies' "Wow Scow". And as the tide came in to swallow the sculptures the fleet turned for home.

As ever we owe much of the success of this event to the Walton and Frinton Yacht Club, this year not only did they host the event, welcome us warmly, feed us,

manage the race and safety boats, but also arranged a great band for us on Saturday night. Also we must thank the Brookes and the Wilberforces who kindly let us invade their gardens with

tents. TARS have also supported us again this year, not only with the presence of Ragged Robin,



but with the generous donation of a prize.

SWALLOWS & AMAZONS - RESULTS

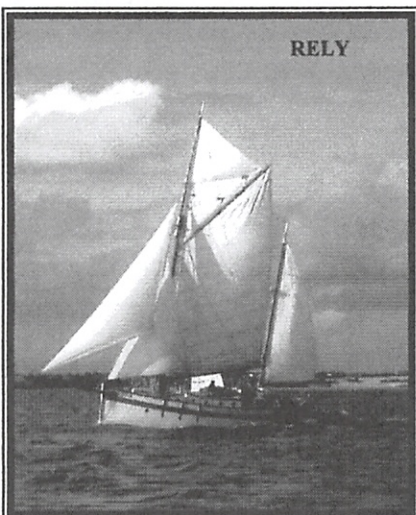
Over all	Spinel	First	Nancy Blackett Cup
Jewel	Spinel	First in class	Jewel tankard
Traditional Gaffer	Dido Cygnet 2nd	First in class	Downs Road & TARS
Spirit of Tradition	Dabchick Melon Felix	First in class 2nd 3rd	Spirit of Trad Barrel
Smacks boat	Willow Lettuce Happy Days	First in class 2nd 3rd	Morning Cloud model
Scow	Suky	First in class Junior Helm	Scow oar Junior Helm Cup
New classic	Orca Tide Race The Boggart	First in class 2nd 3rd	New Classics tankard
Little Gaffer	Peter Pan 2	First in class	Little Gaffers tankard

AUGUST CLASSICS CRUISE 2005

Many said it was the best event they had taken part in for years. It can't have been the weather, as we averaged nearly an inch of rain a day. Good social occasions for all ages (and canines), good places and good racing obviously helped, but it was really the many who took part gelling together.

PASSAGE RACE

The event started with a passage race from home ports to the Suffolk Orwell and Ipswich. Reynardine, a rather under-canvassed cruising ketch, could not have had a better brisk wind from the SSW, sailing out of the Walton Backwaters, meeting up with Random and My Quest from further south. Meanwhile the slip-



pery smack Transcur was waiting up the River Stour with Itchen Ferry Reverie, plus a few others elsewhere who were able to race in such awful conditions. Winner on this event is the one who makes the best average speed on passage. Well Reynardine may not be much of a racer (yet), but she knows how to get from point A to point B during closing hours, and managed over 6 knots, despite more foul than fair tide. Transcur was second at five and a bit knots, closely followed by My Quest. In the Classic Bermudans Quiet Days (out of Mersea) won.

IPSWICH WET DOCK

I think they call this dock wet be-

cause it is always raining. Lots of other gaffers were there, lots of acquaintances were renewed, before repairing to the local OGA Penthouse suite (Crows Nest) for a World Presidential Reception. Next day after repairing the usual headaches and stomachs, entrants underwent the formal registration process on Avola, receiving a gift of a Speedy Stitcher (compliments of Classic Marine) as well as a copy of the risk assessment and sailing instructions.

REGATTA SPORTS (?)

The OGA is probably the only organisation to attempt to run a regatta in the Wet Dock on a regular basis. It is probably the only occasion when so many different types of rubber dinghies are put against each other in testing conditions. So much so you would think the event should have been sponsored by the London Rubber Company.

First event was the rowing race, with or without dogs, and there were several heats before the winner was found. A shark was seen following one rubber vessel, and even came aboard on one occasion. Then alternative green forms of propulsion were tried, varying from traditional square rig to the revolutionary umbrella rig. Actually the Tinker Tramp won, proving that Plastimo, Avn etc have a very long way to go.

Amongst all the flubbery we did have rigid interludes with smack boat sailing and sculling, the latter very keenly contested in the final between the skippers or Pete's of Reverie and Transcur.

But back to the real flubber trials. Outwitting the League Against Cruel Sports, the OGA organised a duck hunt on the Wet Dock. There were lots of accusations of cheating, and some disqualifications before the boats

displayed their hauls to the judges.



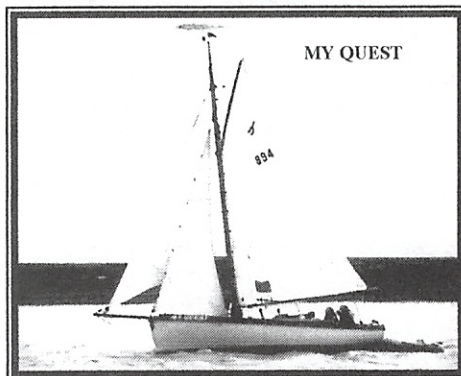
Because of the cheating tendency of the players, it was decided to dispense with most rules for the Association Dinghy Football Match. Team Reynardine was pit against Team Quest, which not only had more dogs and children, but also played their substitute as well. Team Reynardine, playing a new Plastimo astern struck with the first goal, perfectly legally. But then the match deteriorated, with the Reynardine skipper being drenched and Team Quest carrying the ball - the development from football to rugby happened remarkably quickly. Dogs attacked, women jumped ship, pensioners fired water pistols. Team Quest equalised illegally but the rules had changed, team Reynardine scoring two more goals to go 3-1 up. But then disaster happened when Team Reynardine skipper breaking up the left wing for his hat-trick was illegally up-ended into the dock by the Team Quest substitute, leaving the field open to the opposition while he struggled to find his sodden risk assessment. Team Quest scored 3 more goals and all would have been lost, had Dog Matey not dived



into the water and scored the equaliser in extra time, then finishing the match by puncturing the ball with his teeth.

TWO RIVERS RACE

There does come a time when gaffers go racing, and a course was set from the Orwell Bridge down to Harwich Harbour, then up the River Stour to finish off Wrabness. In spectacular form the start ship Avola arranged a huge thunderstorm as a 10 minute signal, causing Ayesha to go out of control at speed in excess of 15 knots. But it did sharpen up gaffers starting skills, as virtually the whole fleet hit the line on the gun. Then the fleet gradually untangled and made a more dignified run down the river, before taking a close fetch up the Stour to finish. At least the leaders did, the tail enders having to tack a bit as wind became fluke. There was a big debate about Crow, the new high tech gaff yawl. Cold molded black hull, carbon fibre unstayed masts, rotating mizzen, self acting balanced foresail, alloy gaff and boom, lots of special tweak-



back to winches etc., not quite the sticks and string of Victorian Gaffers! She was seen at the start and again at the finish. But not seen during the race. Like a "Stealth" military plane or ship, becoming invisible in action, something to do with the shape. Obviously even more hi-tech than she looks, she was renamed "Stealth". She was followed by Transcur in second place and My Quest in third. In the berms class Rhumba took first place, followed by Maggie May, a Peter Duck ketch retrofitted with a fully battened mast-head sloop rig!

In the evening we had a magnificent barbecue with 80 plus diners on the beach at Wrabness on a beautiful

night.

CRUISE TO WALTON BACKWATERS

This was a nice gentle day, even with sunshine. This was a chance for boats to air their light weather sails with a gentle drift down the Stour. The wind turned to the SSW to give a beat across Dovercourt Bay into the Twizzle, where the fleet moored up. It was nice to change the maritime scenery for a little while, with so many traditional craft at anchor. There was a pleasant party on Stone Point in the evening, where we were briefed on the next day's racing.

PENNYHOLE BAY RACE

The start was at Island Point, the fleet setting sail in Hamford Water before running down to the start. It was another keenly contested start, the channel hardly being wide enough for the large number of boats. There was one minor accident when Moonstone's mainsheet got hooked up on Bonify's Bowsprit, and ensuing untangling action catching Maid of Tessa's whisker pole and breaking it. Fortunately there was no further damage and all three boats were able to continue racing. And there were no protests afterwards!

After the big boats had started, the committee boat Avola started another race for open boats "Round the Islands" of the Walton Backwaters, which is possible at High Water. The little gaff and lug rigged boats sailed up Hamford Water, past Skippers Island then across the Wade before returning down the Twizzle to the start.

Meanwhile the big boats had rounded Walton no 2 buoy without incident, and were close reaching fast to Pennyhole Bay Buoy. Crow had already gone into stealth mode, chased by Transcur, Ayesha and Bonify. The beautiful Albert Strange Yawl Charm was also showing her paces in only her second race since restoration, whilst Moonstone belied her small size with her speed and position. The fleet went on the run again to Stone Banks and the Fox's Racing Mark as the wind started to build and affect some of the smaller boats. There was a fast reach to Outer Ridge, and conditions got tougher on the close fetch to Pye End. The beat back to Walton No

2 was a matter of tactics, Reynardine tacking out to sea to catch the last of the South going tide to take out Maid



of Tessa, Random and Gromit. But the down wind fliers had enough distance ahead under their belts to take their lead to the finish.

Crow re-appeared to win at the finish, Ayesha second, Transcur third. But there were very creditable performances from Bonify, Fanny and My Quest. On corrected time Fanny won the Pennyhole Bay Trophy, Crow was second and Bonify third. Quiet Days won the bermudan classics class.

PASSAGE TO THE DEBEN

The night's downpour having eased off to mere occasional drizzle, the wind went to the NNW to give a calm sea and a slant up the coast to Felixstowe Ferry. We had to push the young flood to reach Woodbridge Haven Buoy at two hours before high, so the tide would take us safely over the bar past the seething shingle banks into the tranquil river. On our way we were met by the gaff cutter Cachelot, a Dunkirk Little Ship, first time she has been with the gaffers for 10 years.

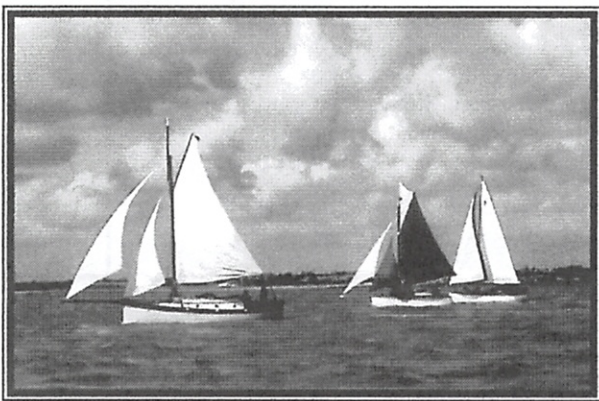
The gaffer fleet cruised up the river past the Ferry, Ramsholt and Waldringfield, before entering the Tide Mill Yacht Harbour at Woodbridge, a very picturesque Suffolk market town, where we could stock up on provisions. The incredible downpour at high water kept us confined to pubs for as many hours as we wanted! However it eased up afterwards, and with a little influence from the World President the Woodbridge Cruising Club opened up for us in the evening!

The next afternoon, we left the Tide Mill for a gentle meander to Ramsholt. There we stayed for the night and the Ramsholt Arms served us a meal in a

super old tent. The Shipping forecast was read by Graham Wadeson!

SCANDINAVIAN SEAWAYS RACE TO LEVINGTON

The next morning the fleet set out down the river and over the Deben Bar, to start their passage race from Woodbridge Haven Buoy. The fickle head wind eventually died to nothing. Only Reverie's "Bastard" (ex Sheila, Tarka and Deval) could catch any draft. Crow re-materialised to find herself not up the Orwell, but in the Walton Backwaters, probably some hi-tech hitch with on board computers. With the tide about to turn to the ebb, most sensibly retired and put on engines. However a little breeze did pop up on the turn of the tide, and Bonify, Fanny and Reverie persevered in beating against a foul tide to be the only finishers. They were also the most deserved winners of the magnificent Scandinavian Seaways Bells!



PRESIDENTS RACE

This was the final race of the Classics Week, for another of the famous Shotley Trophies presented originally by Harwich Haven Authority in honour of an OGA President, who is still with us! The start line was at the Harwich Harbour entrants, another spectacular start by the fleet, though Fanny and Ayesha were half a second early and had to recross!

The wind was a brisk 4/5 from the NNW and rising, giving the fleet a speedy first leg on a broad reach to Pennyhole. We had another welcome addition to the fleet, the Bawley Bona.

Crow meanwhile was still having trouble with her stealth operating system, and the smack Transcur was leading the way under a cloud of sail, closely followed by Ayesha and Bonify. Fanny was doing catch-up big time, setting a massive asymmetric spinnaker, which gave her running backstays a lot of work to do! It was touch and go whether to gybe or not before the Fox's leeward mark, and then My Quest began to work the overlap rule by asking for water at the mark, which Reynardine very graciously granted, giving her skipper enough room to take his coaster through! He tried it on again at Outer Ridge, slightly ruder reply from Bona and co., but got away with it!

The beat up to Pye End was another chance to work the tidal sets, this time it paid to work the harbour tide sweeping up round the outside of the shipping channel. Bona didn't do this and allowed Reynardine to slip ahead of her and Reverie. There was a brief respite for a beer or two for the beam reach to Harwich Shelf, then it was on the wind again for making up the Orwell. The front runners, now Crow, Ayesha and Transcur, rounded College in one hit, but a sailing barge and one or two inconsiderate motorboaters and modern yachties made it difficult for others, Bonify and Reynardine being made to put in a short tack. No such bad luck for Bona and Reverie, with others behind, and the middle order began to close up.

Collimer was the last mark before a short beat to cross the line, and for a gaffers race it was a close finish for the whole fleet, everyone had sailed a good race from the hi-tech Crow to the converted Scottish fishing vessel Rely. Only seconds separated Crow from Ayesha, most of the fleet crossing within 20 minutes of the first boat across. By the time the handicap corrections had been worked out, nip-and-tuck at the mark My Quest was the winner, followed by Fanny and a really-on-form-today Gromit. In the Bermu-

dans, Rhumba won her class from Random, and was awarded the President's Cup because of a slightly better corrected time than My Quest. A nice gesture by a Gaff Rig organisation which typifies our friendships!

A dinner was laid on for the OGA in the bowels of the Haven Ports Yacht Club Lightship, after which we had the prizegiving. There were lots of special awards, such as the Deadeye trophy for Rely's performance as a heavy work boat, Bollox Maximus for the Crow skipper falling off a pontoon, Bitter End for PTK's persistence on the previous race, and the Hot Air trophy to Kelpie 2's skipper for appreciating his own confusion between topsail and foresail halliards. Avola was awarded glasses for her outstanding work as committee boat and registration vessel. All entrants who had stayed the full course of the classics were awarded Classic Boat or Watercraft subscriptions. However the main occasion was the awarding of the Points Series Prizes of the week. Fanny won the Gaff Points Series, with My

Quest second and Transcur third. In the Bermudans, Quiet Days won, with Maid of Tessa second. Fanny was awarded Victor Ludorum for the overall best contribution to the event.

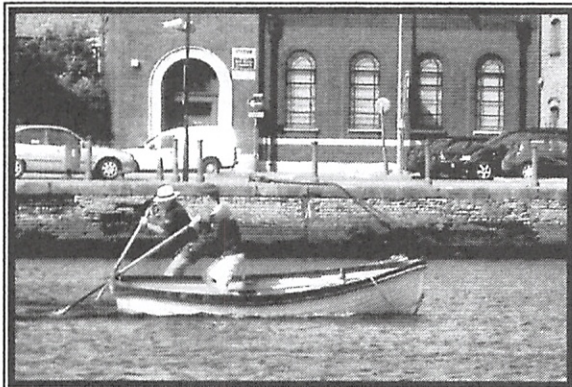
THANKYOUS

For a moving event like the August Classics a lot of work has to go on in the background. Barbecues don't appear by magic, neither do rubber ducks in Ipswich Wet Dock. Marinas don't just find space for such a large fleet in high season, neither do pubs and clubs put on set meals on busy nights. Complex ratings, placings and prize awards take a lot of working out. Setting courses, starting and finishing races on a moving festival is not easy either. It all has to be arranged. So a big thank you to Mike, PTT, Clare, Brian, Lorna, Wendy, Phil, PTK, Sarah, Rob and others who helped in various ways.

Laying on an event at £30 per boat per week is a bit of a gamble financially. There are lots of administrative and fixed costs. Fortunately this year we had good entries, but we would not have been able to make sure everyone had some souvenir or prize to take back with them. So we thank Classic Marine for the Speedy Stitchers, Seafarer Books for giving us books for prizes, Classic Boat and Watercraft Magazines for subscription prizes.

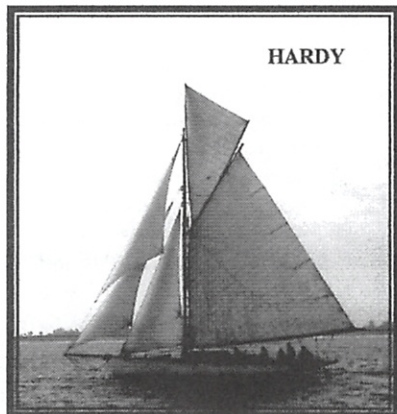
We also thank Ipswich Haven Marina, Titchmarsh Marina, Tide Mill Yacht Harbour, Suffolk Yacht Harbour, Woodbridge Cruising Club, Ramsholt Arms and Haven Ports Yacht Club for making the effort to accommodate us at such a busy time of the year.

Lastly, but by no means least, we thank the entrants for participating in such a good way. It was a real pleasure for the organisers. I don't think I have been to a traditional craft event where the sailing has been to such a high standard. It was an honour to come last in such company!



OGA ANNIVERSARY RALLY & MALDON TOWN REGATTA 23 SEPTEMBER

Back in the mists of time the OGA was formed at Maldon Little Ship Club on 23 September 1963, after the success of the first East Coast Old Gaffers Race. In 1985 the East Coast Area started a September rally and race at Maldon to commemorate the occasion. Unfortunately through lack of support and competition from other organisations this failed after a few years. Maldon Town Regatta has a history going well back into the nineteenth century, but this had fizzled out through lack of support too. However, a couple of people from both camps



thought this was a poor do, and thought why don't we get together and revive both events as one? Thus the "modern" event was formed, utilising many of the old trophies from the past.

The 2006 regatta race started at West Mersea, on a beautiful morning, quite in contrast to the strong winds and rain of the previous day which had affected people coming from afar. The Barge Yacht Blackthorn made a very appropriate starting ship, and when all the smacks had deposited their dinghies with her, she did look like a spritsail rigged mother duck with large brood astern!

The course was initially seaward of the Nass, then across the Blackwater Estuary to No 2 buoy off St Peters, before going up river to finish off Osea Island. The local smacks led off first, followed by other classes including gaffers and bermudan classics. Unfortunately the SE wind was very slow in materialising.

It was a struggle for some of the slower boats to make over the tide, being forced to work the shallows, whilst the sleek well sail-endowed smacks could almost go straight there! No 2 buoy was the real killer, because however well you had worked the shallows off Mersea to gain your easting, the rapids near the mark swept you away. Gromit got within spitting distance, but was swept away much to the mirth of Bonify's crew, who thought they had plenty of sea room. But even they missed and spat at the buoy in disgust at having to tack again. The smack Boadicea's skipper who failed also to make the buoy in one hit was asked by another vessel Reynardine why after four generations fishing the area he had not managed to do something about the tide round here. He said he was working on the Blackwater Tidal Barrage.

Course B had a near repeat of the No 2 situation, with a leg over to No 5 by Bradwell (Locals refer to the area as the Bradwell Triangle with its crazy winds and currents). Those of us who had been well practised at no 2 were very pleased to get round it, only find we had missed the signal about shorten course....! (huge skipper embarrassment to crew). The wind by now had picked up to the East, giving a gentle run past Thirstlet to finish off Osea Island, made sweeter still with the tide under us.

At Osea it was time to start the second race or Parade of Sail up the last stretch of the Blackwater. Sensibly the smacks were sent off first, because I think it would be very dangerous to be mixed up with that lot with wind astern! Then it was the turn of the other classes, which was bad enough to make the more timid of us keep to the rear of the fleet. As you know rivers tend to narrow as you go up them, which is bad enough, but on the Blackwater the rare arrival of water over the mud is celebrated by every local boat owner taking to his boat and heading seaward... Only to be greeted by scores of bowsprits and booms of hairy smacks coming the other way. Throw in the odd barge and Viking Saga doing day trips and ooops!... but fortunately there were no disasters and surprisingly little shouting as the fleet roared



onwards to Hythe Quay.

Maldon Hythe Quay is a very picturesque setting with the town buildings rising behind on the hill. The quayside was crammed with spectators watching the fleet come in under sail, the band was playing, there were lots of stalls. Boats lowered sail and moored up where they could along the quay. Crews then made their way to Taylors Yard where barrels of beer (sponsored by OGA!) were waiting to be drunk!

Then it was time for the prizegiving, prizes being presented by the Lady Mayor of Maldon Town. In the big smacks, Richard Titchenor's smack Sallie was first, Ian Smith's bawley Bona was second. In the gaffers class, Nigel Waller's Itchen Ferry Fanny of Cowes was first, followed by Howard and Sue's ferro Archer Bonify. The Special Maldon Molusce Prize went to the Buchanan designed ketch Reynardine for last on corrected time, clearly practising for the Old Harry trophy next year. In the Bermudans, Maid of Tessa (R Williamson) and Rhumba (C Church) won prizes.

A special tribute was paid to Peter Maynard for all the work he had put into the regatta over the years.

After a few more beers, the dinner gong sounded at Maldon Little Ship Club, and an excellent meal prepared by the club was served. As people finished eating, Rob Williamson, Area President of the East Coast Old Gaffers, proposed a toast to the association, and also invited those present, whether members or not, to the East Coast OGA party (and AGM) at Colne Yacht Club Brightlingsea on November 11.

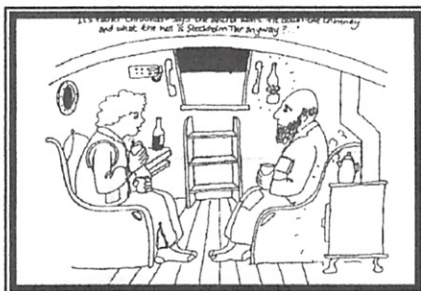


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*It's Father Christmassays Anchor won't fit down
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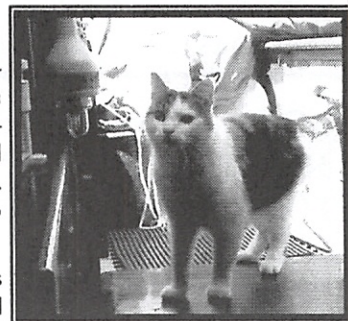
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Fleet Review

I must have the highest ratio of ships to admiral anywhere! They would not put up with these conditions in the Merchant Navy either. Off one gaffer then almost straight on to another, very little shore leave. Some other similar operations (e.g. Mackenzie Shipping) do match personnel growth to fleet numbers, but unfortunately not in my fleet. (Must be the age of C-in-C fleet, but we are not allowed to say that now!)



Maryll, operating out of the Enkhuizen submarine pen, has continued to patrol overseas waters. Many successful tours of operation have been had. IJsselmeer, Friesland and Islands and many other waterways have been undertaken. It has even stopped raining for a short while in Netherlands on two occasions this year. But there have been times when it has been so wet, even GRP and Steel bermudans have leaked. So much for modern construction. Presidential overseas shipping movements have been logged, such ships being surprised when a Morecambe Bay Prawner comes to periscope depth and demands a beer. There is no hiding place for the Politburo. Representing the OGA Maryll has been to the Dutch OGA Rally in May, The VKSJ event at Vollandam and the big joint Kotters, VKSJ and OGA.nl rally in Enkhuizen. On all occasions a good time was had, but Fleet Intelligence can't remember why. Might be something to do with the beer.

Fleet Disposals have still not performed. The practice of "outsourcing" sales overseas has not worked. Far better and cheaper in hindsight to have used Eastcoastoldgaffers.co.uk, but never mind, Maryll is fun and a great little ship, even if the rest of Europe don't appreciate her. And she now has her own cat, always there to welcome her when returning from patrols. She somehow hears the bridges to Oostenhaven open and knows it is Maryll, and time for a feed on best gouda cheese (Kaas) and bacon (Spek) rind.

The new Flagship Reynardine has continued commissioning trials. How Alan Buchanan, famous naval architect, could have sent a ship to sea without getting the basics sorted out to at least East Coast standards amazes me. However, it has been a useful season and fault finding operation on the East coast. Inclination tests – obviously not done since she was launched, have provided evidence of a major design fault on the port tack, with the water tank being higher than the faucet. There's barely enough water to dilute a whiskey, never mind what is needed for respectable catering normally provided by Fleet Dining Services, and when it drains out.... Thank goodness Fleet Services installed the vanity unit with independent water supply. But an extra water tank will be needed. For all those who decry racing as a sport for the reckless and not proper sailing for the sensible, taking part in OGA races is actually what has to be done to make the rig work and manoeuvre. Quite clearly Buchanan did not know his sheeting positions, that the staysail has to be sheeted to a narrower angle than the jib, and that the main needs to be narrower angle than the staysail, and the mizzen needs to be narrower angle than the main. And can you really expect a boat to go to windward with a saggy luff? But we are getting there now, although we are still light on sail horsepower, no doubt a winter consultation in Tollesbury is called for! During the season alcohol retaining units (ARU Mk 3's actually) were installed in the cockpit. These are also useful for putting other things in like sail ties, sun tan lotion (Not on East coast surely). But it is such a long way down to the beer cellar, curse these bigger boats, you have to have such arrangements. Well the boat can't have been sailed much, drunk or eaten on board much, but perhaps it had been motored a lot? No, it can't have been, because the sterngear was over 1/4" out of alignment, noticed at the Classics cruise. Now has half an inch of packing under the engine, but who put the engine beds in like that? Don't suppose a bit here and there matters in Gweek boat building circles in Cornwall.

Mind you Admiral Grumpy can't really talk. The coach roof and temporary hatchway he put on Deva 20 + years ago (albeit whilst afloat) needs replacing. For a 24 hour period Deva was either eligible for Class III open boats or had unlimited standing headroom with complete air-con, while Fleet Services replaced the decking. Still a lot of work to do, special carpentry skills are required to build a trapezoidal leak proof sliding hatch which looks straight. Hopefully Deva will be launched either the end of the year or early in 2007 for East Coast Winter sailing. Reynardine will be lifted out for completion of commissioning works in November. So with only Maryll and one other gaffer, the fleet will be down to 2/3rds strength. But even that is an improvement on Stena Line, who are to withdraw my high speed commuting runabout HSS Discovery on the Harwich Hook route on January 7.

