

EASTCOASTER

ISSUE 69

FEBRUARY 2007

ANNUAL DINNER AT THE ROYAL BURNHAM YACHT CLUB - MARCH 3

The Royal Burnham Yacht Club is again the prestigious setting for the East Coast Annual Dinner, and the Godfather and the Crouch Mafia look forward to making us very welcome. Of course invitations also go out to our cousins in Medway North Kent Area and Netherlands. At least two presidents are expected to be in attendance at this gathering.

A four course dinner (at only £22.50) will be served in the sumptuous dining room, followed by Presidential and Crouch Mafia toasts. These will be followed by a short presentation by Roger Taylor (Mary Ellen) "South Seas Voyage on a Square Rigger". This is not to be missed, but you wouldn't want to do it!

This is a great chance to get together to chat in the bar about plans for the new season, and if you are

a new member, meet up with others. Denise and Trevor Rawlinson will be only too happy to introduce you to other members and make sure you



are welcome.

There will be a choice on main and sweet courses, please consult the menu elsewhere, before you book in.

For those from afar who wish to stay overnight there are various pubs and hotels which do accommodation at a reasonable price: Anchor (01621 782117), White

Hart (01621 782106), both on the waterfront; Ship (01621 785057) on the High Street, The Railway (01621 786 868) or Oyster Smack (01621 782141) on Station Road. The Royal Burnham may also be able to do cabins- check with Fred.

For those who wish to bring their boudoir and sea-dog by boat from Kent or even nearer, there is the RBYC pontoon!

Because of the catering arrangements with contact staff, it is very difficult this year to make last minute bookings or alterations, so please can you send in your booking form and menu choice (BACK PAGE!) at least a week beforehand, or telephone Fred (Denise Rawlinson) 01621 783 969.

Dress code for men is jacket and tie. Women must be dressed. Dark glasses for Crouch Mafia.

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FANNY ROMPS HOME IN EAST COAST POINTS SERIES!

1st Fanny of
Cowes
2nd Bonify
3rd Stealth (Crow)

42 DAYS OF EVENTS- STILL NOT ENOUGH?

If we can just add some good weather, it should be a great time sailing Gaffers on the East Coast. If you like racing or cruising, quiet times or big parties, or simply making a pig of yourself, there should be something for every body in the 2007 programme! Watch out for developments on our website www.eastcoastclassics.co.uk. This Eastcoaster has outline details of events and contact numbers, so you can plan your year. The next issue in May will have more details. But why wait? You will be able to download forms and sailing instructions as they come available. Our big event is the East Coast Old Gaffers Race on June 16th, which you must support, but there is a lot else going on!

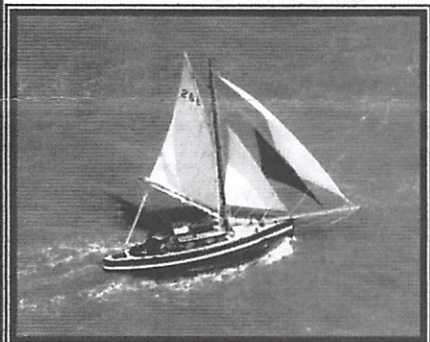
EURO CHALLENGE FOR KESTREL!

Will Kestrel retain
the European Cup?
2007 is
Hellevoetsluis Year!

Sec's Report

Another new sailing season beckons, and members thoughts turn to the fitting out work that awaits them. Sail-makers are chased up for that secret topsail order, you try and work out where you can fit that latest marine (?) gizmo where no-one can see it and make fun of you. Some of us try and get through the winter by keeping the boat afloat, every stolen sail in the winter being a big notch out of the most depressing time of year. Much of the winter has been very warm and windy, perhaps a fore-warning of climate change. Certainly you see many more people sailing in winter months than you used to.

The back room boys in the OGA have been planning lots of events for us to attend. I thought we did quite a lot on the East Coast, but most of you will have read a letter from a resigning member that we didn't do enough to warrant the subscription. As chair



of the national sailing committee I have something of an insight of what is going on in other areas, and I think this area compares favourably with most, though we can always learn from others. Probably we are not as sociable amongst the membership as some areas are, though we have good times together after our sailing events. Perhaps we could have more non-sailing events in the winter period? We do have demographic problems with membership being scattered over such a large area, but we ought to try.

We've had the AGM in London. One of the problems of such a large organisation is that a lot of energy has to be focused on necessary administrative and policy issues. This can be a bit of a turn off for ordinary members who only joined the OGA to sail with gaff rigged boats, share information about them and have a bit of fun. This is an area where we compare badly with smaller class associations,

not engaging members' interest sufficiently. I got some black looks from some in the higher echelons of the OGA by producing a substantial Sailing Committee Report on sailing related issues. But it was something to redress the balance!

To be fair to the General Management Committee, they are putting up many more "International" trophies and awards for sailing members to compete for. We as an area ought to do more to support these, it is a bit of cement to bring members throughout the OGA together. You will note elsewhere that the Dutch are off to a flying start for the Cape Horn Trophy!

Still on Dutch matters, it's a Hellevoetsluis year in 2007. I know I keep referring to my Dutch experiences in one way or other, but for a lot of Eastcoasters it is a principal destination for the annual cruise. The North Sea passage can be daunting, but once over there, the lock gates close behind you, and there is a world of inland cruising awaiting, with friendly natives too. Why not join the regulars who make this bi-annual migration. If you have not crossed the North Sea before, it's a good way of doing it, knowing that there is understanding company around you to give you confidence in your little ship.

On the East Coast we have 42 days of sailing events outlined in our programme (including the week at Hellevoetsluis), which means a busy time for the committee. Fortunately we have a good set of members who share the load, so we can cope. But it is so much more fun for us if others can help in some way or other. The association is what we collectively make of it. It's not what the members get out of the club- It's what the members can do for the club. So any contributions or assistance in more or less any form are much appreciated!

You will see that we have had to say goodbye to three of our members, Gayle, Dick and Ian. If there is a gaffer heaven where tide always serves, the wind is fair and the company good, we wish them well. But just in case there is not, it is a timely reminder for all of us, however young or old, to make the best of life.

So let's do it and let's make sailing old gaffers part of it!

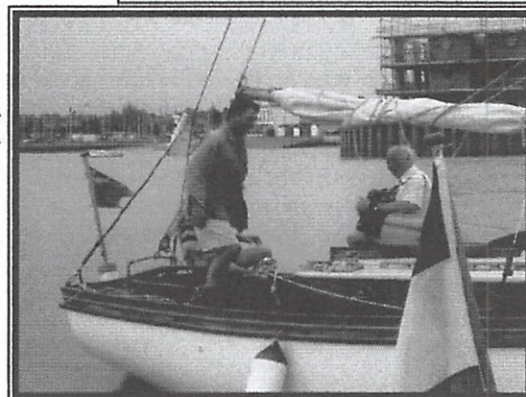
Jon Wainwright



Classic Bermudan Points Series

With boats almost as varied as the gaffers, the Points Series proved to be a great leveler. The slippery Finesse Quiet Days, although she won the Bermudan points in the August Classics, was not able to get into the Silver this time. Clive Church's Rhumba struck gold each time she raced, but she didn't do enough races to get better than third. The East Coast President's Vertue, Maid of Tessa, was more often than not having a private match race with Owendo, but still found time to come second.

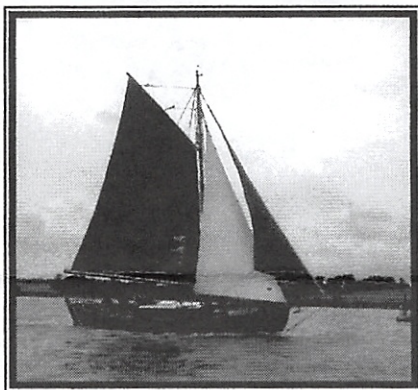
The winner, Random, does not always strike form, but when she does, it matters. Four reasonable results, including a vital first on the Crouch, were enough to take her to the top of the table.



TOM FELGATE MEMORIAL TROPHY 2006 POINTS SERIES

Well, the computers have done their number crunching, and the East Coast Points Series has been decided! The East Coast OGA, as far as we know, is the only gaff rig/ classics association, to lay on a Points Series. As you know, gaffers come in all shapes and sizes, and it is difficult with an individual race to see how a boat has performed over a season.

And of course, a points series tends to reward those who turn out regularly, rather than the flash in the pan merchant. The races we have are not serious races, and there is rarely any shouting or aggression. The idea is we enjoy ourselves sailing amongst lovely boats, and sailing them as well as they deserve to be!



Despite what some may say about handicapping, the Points Series illustrates how boats of almost every type can do well, if they are sailed to a reasonable standard. New boat, old boat, workboat, yacht, big boat, small boat, they have all featured in past years in the top places in the Points Series.

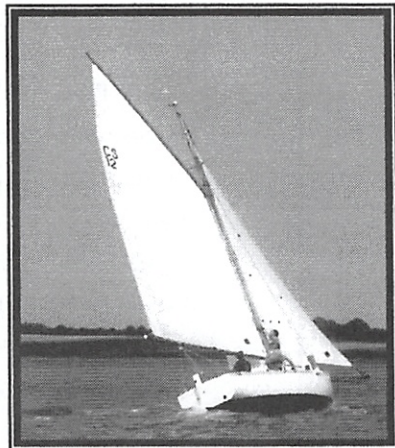
2006 has been no different. Two centenarian ex fishing boats are well placed in the series, as well as two more modern vessels on working boat lines. These are vessels not designed to rate well or race, more to do a job efficiently in specific waters. And another aspect of a points series is to see how boats are improving, being sailed nearer to their potential, whilst owners of new boats in the fleet can get an idea of how they really rate with the competition.

Looking at the top ten, it probably wasn't the best suited weather for the little Molly Cobbler, but she had a good Crouch rally, and would have undoubtedly benefited in the smooth waters of the Maldon race. The amazing My Quest relished the brisk

conditions at sea in the August Classics, and again, had she raced more often would have been in the silver. Ric on Kelpie II is the only OGA member to complain about the easing of a handicap, he knows the boat can go better, it's down to him. And despite a rotten start, her result in the East Coast Old Gaffers Race shows he is getting there. Reverie has also been showing increasing pace, with incremental improvements to the rig and boat management, though perhaps Pete went too far with the experimental bowthruuster to help her through stays. Moonstone, David and Persephone's little Drascombe did very well, considering many of her races were in open water, and with full cruising gear aboard too. Often in Blackwater races you see big macho crews on the smacks, implying the need of a vast amount of "grunt" for the heavy gear. But Transcur belies that impression, sturdy and swift smack she may be, but very well managed by her family crew.

Now we come to the gaffers in the silverware end of the points series. In third place, Crow, from the man who gave us Dirty Girty, shows us all just how versatile and different gaff rig can be. Her cold moulded centreboard hull needs but two feet of water to float her 34 feet length, her mizzen rotates to furl around the carbon fibre mast, her foresail is self acting. And she sails "Back to the Future", so fast is she- no wonder she is called "Stealth", not a ripple on the water as she almost dematerialises with speed to the front of the fleet.

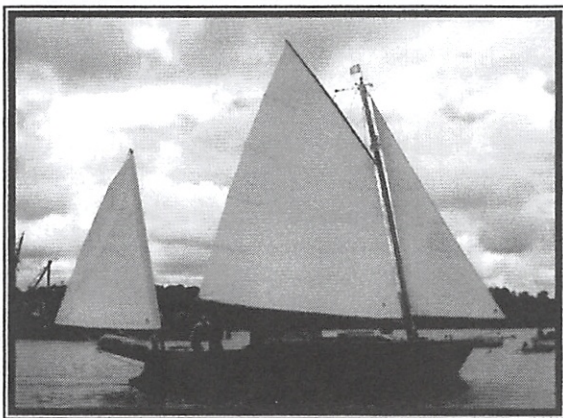
The second placed vessel, the Colin Archer type cutter Bonify, typifies the benefits of taking part regularly in gaffers races. Not much more than 5 years ago, she would be last in a race which had any windward work in it and less than force 5, especially in the company we are talking about. But Howard and Sue did not give up, and gradually they have trimmed the rig so she is really one of the faster boats now. The Scandinavian Seaways Race (not actually in the Points Series) was a prime example- a very light headwind and foul tide which she beat against to win the race when so many



other boats had to retire. The new apparel at the masthead could be set in the warm weather, without discomfort, and even looked the part of a well set topsail.

The winning vessel does not, at first sight, look a fast boat. Beamy, square stern and fairly modest working rig are not the normal criteria of a fast boat in all weathers. Indeed a couple of years ago this boat was not. But someone must have told Nigel Waller how the Itchen Ferry Fanny of Cowes used to win almost every gaffer race going in the 60's, her name on the East Coast Old Gaffers Trophy until 1971. Because she is re-born as a consistent winner, and sailed by probably the most expert racing crew in the OGA. Her spinnaker handling is as good as you will see in top sports boat racing, and she doesn't make many mistakes. Her sheeting positions are just right, her running backstays go right to the stern and she goes!

The winner of the 2006 Tom Felgate East Coast Points Series is Fanny of Cowes.



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

(Area President) ROB WILLIAMSON 01206 211318
 (Vice President) Peter Elliston 01206 391870
 (Secretary) Jon Wainwright 01206 393537
 (Treasurer) Denise Rawlinson 01621 783969
 (Minute sec) Graham Wadeson 01394 383082
 (Publicity) Bernard Patrick 01376 516420
 (World President) Brian Hammett 01473 231066
 (Burnham Rep) Trevor Rawlinson 01621 783969
 (Prizes Monitor) Wendy Wetherill 01206 385169
 (Swallows & Amazons) Julia Raper 01284 706034
 (Waveney & Norfolk Pres) Mike Robertson 01473 327115
 (Sailing Committee) Peter & Clare Thomas 01473832808
 (Brightlingsea East Coast Race) Richard Giles 01206 308420
 Steve Daley-Yates 01629 760981
 Ex officio:
 (Swallows and Amazons) Tessa Hodgkinson 01629 540601



2006 DIARY DATES

3 March – Annual Dinner at Burnham
 9 March– Sailmaking Evening Brightlingsea
 6-8 April -Easter Rally– Pin Mill
 5-7 May- Foulness Island Rally
 19 May – RHS Trafalgar Rally Holbrook
 26/29 May– Crouch Rally
 8-10 June– Southwold Classic Boat & Smack Rally
 15-18 June East Coast Old Gaffers Race Brightlingsea
 14 –15 July Swallows & Amazons
 17-20 July Visitors Cruise
 21-29 July North Sea Race, Zeeland Cruise & DCYR
 18-27 August Classics Cruise (incorporating East Coast Classics)
 29 September - Maldon Town Regatta and OGA Anniversary Rally

FOR SALE

Cornish Crabber Mk 1 'My Lady'

je.ha@tiscali.co.uk or Telephone; 01394285839

£19,500

Dunkirk Little Ship 'Letitia'

michaelfeather@gmail.com 01284 830634.

£25,000

30ft Aldous Smack Yacht 1896

tessahodgkinson@btinternet.com Tel: 01629 540 601

£18,000

(www.eastcoastclassics.co.uk for details of boats)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS- SAILMAKING EVENING - 9 MARCH

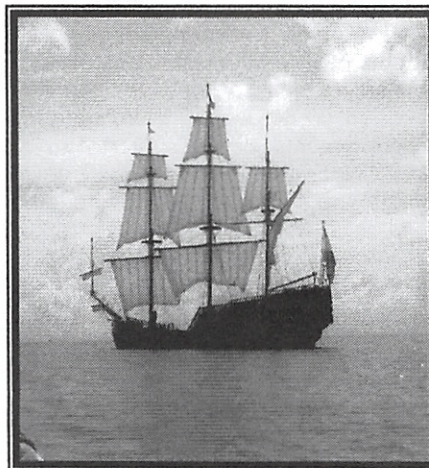
Ever wondered how they make a sail? We are lucky that we still have thriving traditional sailmakers in our region, capable of making made to measure sails to fit our very individual old boats. Not only can they work in a variety of materials to make an old gaffer's glad rags look beautiful, but also they understand how they make such garments useful, and how to make her dance and glide to windward!

James Lawrence Sailmakers of Tower Street, Brightlingsea, are asking some of their staff to stay behind after work to demonstrate their many skills. Skills

with rope work and cringles, skills with cutting cloth and sewing seams.

The plan is to meet up at James Lawrence Sails on Friday after work, and Mark Butler will introduce his staff and get them to show you what they do to create a sail, and also show you some of the special work they have done for famous and unusual vessels.

Afterwards we will adjourn to the Colne Yacht Club for a jar. Numbers are limited, so please could you phone Mike Roberston on 01473 327115 to book in and further details.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS : EASTER RALLY PIN MILL 6-8 APRIL



Easter is quite early this year, but often this is a time for the first shake down cruise of the season. Or for some others a reminder that it is

about time we had the old girl slipped for a lick of paint and tidy up, finish off the old bottles and tins....

Nothing too formal is planned at this stage. But for those who arrive Friday, we'll meet up at the Butt & Oyster at Pin Mill. The general plan is to have a couple of days on the Stour and Orwell, working or playing to the weather, tides and watering hole availability.

Saturday could be a ditch crawl up the Stour to Mistley or Manningtree for a lunchtime pint at the Sailing

Club, then back to Shotley or Harwich for the evening. Sunday could be a voyage up the Orwell to the World Presidential Port of Ipswich.

We'll see what the weather is like, we don't want to do anything too strenuous!

Easter Eggs will be provided to all attending vessels!

Keep an eye on the website for developments: www.eastcoastclassics.co.uk

Call me on 01206 393537, or if you plan to join during the weekend, my mobile number is 07778055918.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS: FOULNESS RALLY 29 APRIL/1 MAY

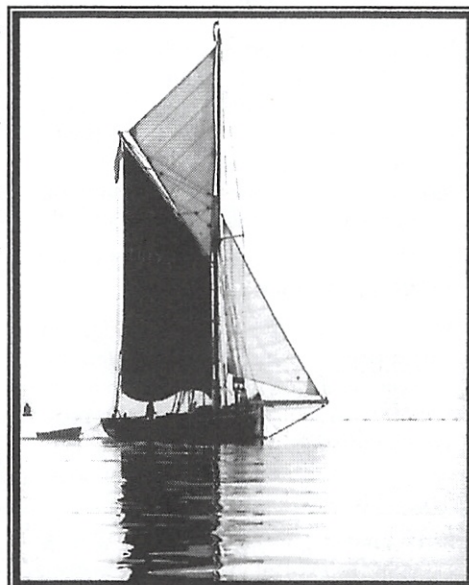
For many of us it is the first shake-down cruise of the season, but it is also a visit somewhere special. Everybody has heard of Foulness Island, literally in some places with the testing of ordinance! But not many people land there and wander through the deserted lanes to the little village and the pub, George and Dragon. It is a unique place to cruise to, you can't say you know the East Coast unless you have been there. It is in a time warp, no traffic, no marinas, no lights. Like the countryside used to be in the 1950's, and we have the pub mostly to ourselves.

The plan is to meet up at Burnham, at the Royal Burnham Yacht Club on Saturday evening for a couple of

beers. Food is available at a number of local pubs. Or if you are a bit late on parade, turn up late morning! Sunday afternoon we sail for Foulness.

At Foulness we anchor off the steps just up the River Roach, Quay Reach, and go ashore in the evening. Do reckon bringing a dinghy and wellies.

Telephone "Fred" (Denise) on 01621 783 969- or mobile 07850287035 to book in and for details.



FORTHCOMING EVENTS!

There's another full programme ahead for the OGA on the East Coast. Most of our sailing events are open to non members, so do put the word around, they might become members later! Also all East Coast sailing events are also cruising rallies, you don't have to race to be part of it all. There are some changes to last year's programme, we are changing location for the Easter Rally, Southwold is back on the calendar, and it is a "Hellevoetsluis" year where we meet up with fellow OGA's from Netherlands, Belgium, Solent and MNK. We also want to give the Annual East Coast Old Gaffers Race a special push to get it back into the mainstream of East Coast traditional sail events.

Contact numbers for events are shown, if not available contact Jon Wainwright, EC OGA Secretary 01206 393537 or JRWainwright@aol.com

Shipmate Classic Yacht Regatta events marked * are not organised by OGA, but are integral to our programme. Web link to DCYR site www.dcyr.nl (In English and Dutch)



19 May - TRAFALGAR RALLY WITH RHS HOLBROOK

Arrive Friday evening at Wrabness, early Saturday morning race on River Stour, back in time to land at Holbrook Creek for walk ashore and guided tour of famous Royal Hospital School. School Dinners served, then back to boats, maybe some more sailing fun in the afternoon, then Wrabness for a bonfire on the beach in the evening. 01473 327115

26-29 May- CROUCH RALLY AT NORTH FAMBRIDGE

Meet Saturday at North Fambridge on the upper Crouch. Ferry Boat Inn for beer and grub. Race on River from North Fambridge Yacht Club on Sunday, prize giving and social in the Club in the evening. Return to home ports on Monday. 01621 783 969

8-10 June- SOUTHWOLD SMACK & CLASSIC BOAT RALLY

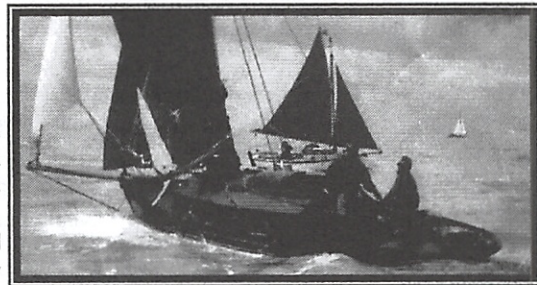
Not the Festival of the Sea, the money's run out, but back to the original format of the OGA, our hosts Southwold Sailing Club, and very likely the local brewery Adnams! Friday passage race from Harwich to Southwold, Saturday Sole Bay Race, Sunday Nancy Oldfield Cup charity race. 01206 393537.

15-18 June - EAST COAST OLD GAFFERS RACE

The real Old Gaffers Race for the fastest boat on the East Coast (which started the OGA in 1963) is on Saturday, but to make it an even better week-end we have some add-ons fore & aft! Friday is the passage race from home ports to finish off Bradwell on the Blackwater, then go ashore for a pie and a pint at the Green Man. In the afternoon we all head for Brightlingsea and the Colne Yacht Club to register for the big race. On Saturday we start the race from Brightlingsea, then sail up the Blackwater to Thirstlet, returning to Brightlingsea to finish the race. There's more than 25 trophies on offer at the prizegiving in the evening, plus food and entertainment at Colne Yacht Club. On Sunday morning the big boats have a Parade of Sail up the Colne, whilst the open boats race up to Wivenhoe. We all meet up at Wivenhoe Sailing Club for a Hog Roast before drifting back on the tide to Brightlingsea. At the Colne Yacht Club there will be a formal dinner. But the culinary climax is actually on Monday! There's an informal race or cruise in company to West Mersea. There we land on Packing Shed Island for a sea-food buffet by the famous Company Shed of Mersea Island. In the evening we are intending to have a special evening charter on a sailing barge or big smack. On Tuesday boats return home, their crews to their dieticians. Richard Giles 01206 308420

14-15 July- SWALLOWS & AMAZONS

A great favourite for open boats and youngsters as we sail the 'Secret Waters' of Arthur Ransome. Hosted by Walton and Frinton Yacht Club, we have a Round the Islands race on Saturday for open boats and traditional dinghies. Paper Boat Races in the Yacht Pond plus Food, social and prizegiving at the Club. Then on Sunday a special exploratory sailing events amongst the



maze of creeks and inlets in the Walton Backwaters, beware of pirates! Julia Raper 01284 706034.

17-20 July- VISITORS CRUISE

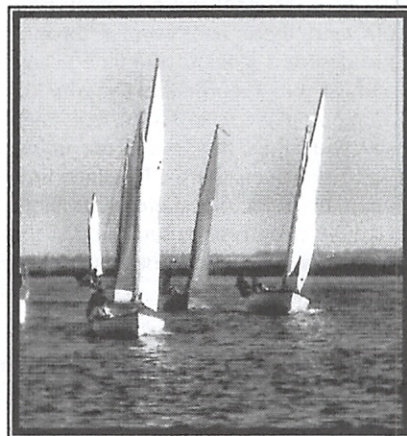
For the boats arriving from overseas and other OGA areas (for the North Sea Classic Passage Race) we are having a short informal cruise -in company, to local ports and rivers. Ends up at Levington for start of North Sea Classic Passage Race 01206 393537 and Joachim 0031654340575

21 July - NORTH SEA CLASSIC PASSAGE RACE (Organised by East Coast and Dutch OGA)

Meet up at Suffolk Yacht Harbour on 20 July, Haven Ports Yacht Club for race briefing. The start will be outside Harwich Harbour, the race finishing outside the entrance to the Roompot Channels. This event is more of a timed cruise in company than a macho offshore race, the idea being to get the fleet over safely for the Shipmate Classic Yacht Regatta. Competitors will keep a detail log of their passage, and there will be prizes for good cruising practice as well as racing. The fleet recovers at the attractive Zeeland port of Zierikzee! 01206 393537 and Joachim 0031654340575

23 July- CRUISE IN COMPANY TO STEENBERGEN *

This secret little port (allegedly originally discovered by the OGA, but



they do speak native Dutch), hidden 5 miles up a little canal off the Volkerak is one of the best rallying locations we have found. Expect a very warm welcome, with beer, genever, herrings and a band, plus a harbour jam packed with lovely classic boats. Originally just for the boats crossing from Harwich and local Zeeland classics, even the boats from the north make for this rally!

24 July- CRUISE IN COMPANY TO WILLEMSTADT*

A short cruise to the beautiful old fortified town of Willemstadt. The organisers of the regatta arrange for



the old harbour to be cleared so the classics can be sardined in to create a fantastic spectacle. Here boats formally register for the Shipmate Classic Yacht Regatta, collecting goodie bags, numbers, class flags etc.

25 July- INFORMAL PASSAGE RACE TO HELLEVOETSLUIS*

With about 150 boats plus edging for the line, not the most relaxing of

starts, but it is meant to be a friendly race to finish off Hellevoetsluis! We are moored up in the town harbour, the Rotterdam Pilot who often assists the process is normally quite tolerant to foreigners, but it is quite a task! Once moored up there is a civic "reception"-takes quite a time in two languages, which is good as free drink and nibbles are served throughout.

26/29 July- RACING ON THE HARRINGVLIET*

There are no herrings in Haringvliet, but that might change soon with the re-introduction of tides as an ecological measure. Several short races are arranged for all the different classes, even 2 per day for the Gaffers! Normally a big tent with beer, prizegivings and entertainment every night.

28 July- CONTINENTAL OLD GAFFERS RACE

Dutch OGA sets the course for a long race on the Haringvliet. You can enter this race separately if you can't make the Classic Yacht Regatta.

18-27 August- AUGUST CLASSICS CRUISE

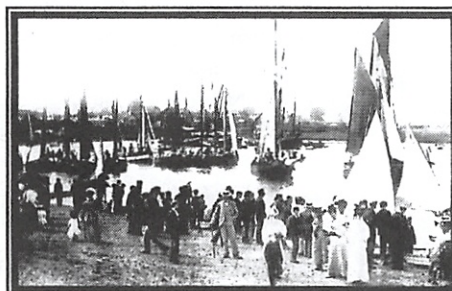
Unique East Coast OGA event format, said by many who take part to be the most enjoyable event of the season. Mixture of old Shotley Classics events (we still compete for the trophies) and East Coast Cruising. Passage Race from home ports and hilarious regatta in Ipswich Wet Dock to get everyone in the right mood! Then a series of cruises in company and at least five races which take us to Orwell, Stour, Walton Backwaters and Deben areas,



classic mooring spots and watering holes. Excellent for all types of gaffer, racer, cruiser, young, old and canine. Pete Thomas 01473 832808.

29 September- MALDON TOWN REGATTA & OGA ANNIVERSARY RALLY

Some years ago these two defunct events were revived and combined to create the best end of season event on the Blackwater. Racing starts off West Mersea and finishes off Osea Island. Then the fleet reforms to create a magnificent Parade of Sail up the last reaches of the Blackwater to finish off Hythe Quay. Big do on the quayside, crews' reception in Taylor's yard, toast to the OGA at Maldon Little Ship Club. Rob Williamson 01206 211318



www.eastcoastclassics.co.uk - Your Website for the East Coast!

With all this "Central" talk about data bases and websites, so of you may not appreciate the East Coast Area has its own website, which can be found at www.eastcoastclassics.co.uk or www.eastcoastoldgaffers.co.uk,

Our website is not just something to advertise our events or show some flashy pictures, it is a working tool. We are a sailing organisation, we have 30-40 days of eventing, many events taking place in unfamiliar areas with special requirements. On the website you will find entry forms and sailing instructions as soon as they have been typed up. After an event you will normally find a full report, results and photographs, much more information than can be carried by paper communications. That is the core business of the site.

Of course there is a lot more to it than that. We have a section for selling boats and other members' gear, we have a big picture gallery if you want to just spend time looking at lovely boats. There is a notice board for any special announcements and a section for cruising logs and accounts. And there's room for photographs as well- there's even a rogues' gallery of most of the committee members. Finally there is the link page. Recently this has been enlarged considerably with some useful sites. Sites which will get you over the Deben Bar, and other pilotage sites; we all check the weather, there are some good links giving short and long term forecasts; there's a couple of sites for services for gaffers. Then there are a number of related club and other sites of general interest. Do have a look at these, it is surprising what is on them. The site is constantly updated, though you can't always tell from the front page. We are constantly looking for ways to add to this communication resource, and welcome contributions and ideas.

It is appreciated that not everyone has access to the internet, or is not at ease using a computer on line. We will continue to provide a full service with Eastcoaster. Indeed the Dutch, who are 100% on line still have a newsletter. However computerised and on line we are, we all like the feel of the real thing! Typical OGA members. We can all sail modern plastic white boats. But there's nothing like sailing a real old gaffer!

DEATH OF AN EAST COAST LEGEND

It is with great regret I have to report that Gayle Heard passed away on Friday 1st December 2006.

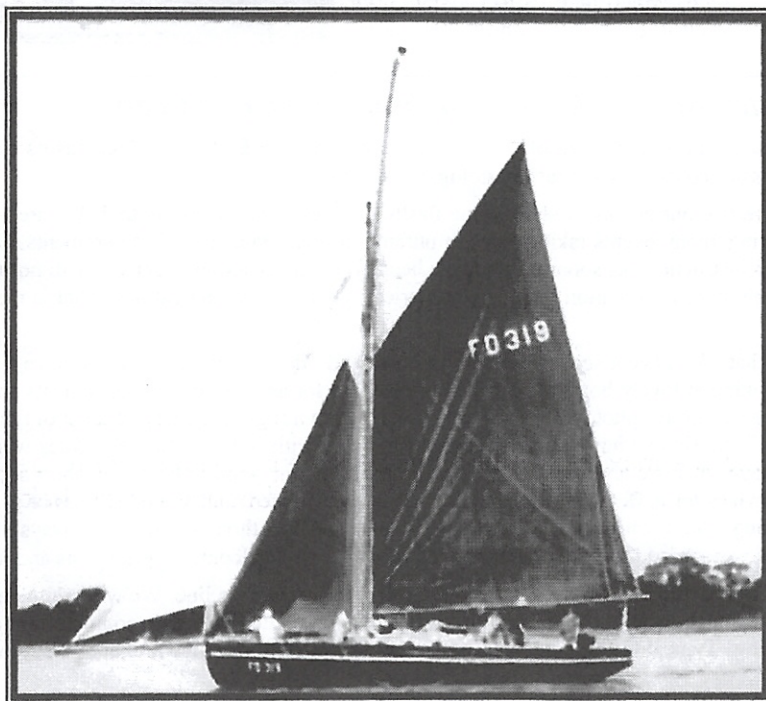
His passing away is more than just the death of a single person, it is the passing away of an era of the zenith of sailing as a profession. His grandfather was skipper of the America's Cup Challenger Endeavour and his father was skipper of the Astra. In the days of the J Class, East Coast fishing villages such as Tollesbury used to provide the skippers and crews to the big yachts of the aristocracy. They fished in the winter, but sailed the big yachts in the summer.

Gayle continued this tradition of professionalism into the present day yachting scene. Apprenticed originally at Gowen's, he later set up his own sailmaking business in Tollesbury, employing some thirty staff in the crafting of high performance sails for top racing boats. He later turned the emphasis of his business to more "traditional" sailmaking, but "traditional" to Gayle still meant no compromise on performance cutting, and the good workmanship could be taken for granted.

His first foray into sailing Old Gaffers was in Jade, a restored Seaview Mermaid. Sailmaking aside, he was an incredible helm and tactician, knowing exactly when to tack, knowing exactly how to trim the sails and knowing exactly how to steer a boat to best speed, whether it was his own boat or a boat he had never sailed before. After he had notched up many victories in Jade, both in Old Gaffers Races or modern competition, he acquired Laura, a 37ft Morecambe Bay Prawner, which had been left to rot on Tollesbury saltings. But Gayle recognised her pedigree and spent some years restoring her to her original glory, and back to gaff rig too.

Laura in Gayle's hands was exceptional. The best racing smacks could match her on a reach or a run, but she would leave them for dead going to windward. Was it the sails, was it the hull, was it the man? Probably a combination of all three, working together. So devastating was her performance, she was effectively banned from smack racing. Once she was entered for the Mersey Nobby Race, but even then she outclassed totally her own class. No longer allowed to race in many events, she went north again, bought by descendants of her original builders, Crossfield of Arneside.

Gayle was a man whose quiet but friendly manner belied a genius of hidden depth. Strong as the most hair-shirted, technically skilled as the most time served, he had that special sensitive understanding of form, balance and aesthetics which makes a true artist.



A service of "Celebration" of this exceptional man's life was held at Tollesbury Parish Church, followed by a wake at the Kings Head. Amongst the many attending were past and present OGA Presidents, Rob Williamson, George Jago and Brian Hammett. The Tollesbury Sailing Club Commodore and the East Coast Secretary spoke at the service.

Gayle leaves his wife Jean, three daughters and a son.

Jon Wainwright

Richard John Churn

Dick as he was known to many of his friends and acquaintances, died very suddenly on 23 December 2006 in Southend Hospital, aged 71 years.

Dick started sailing while in the RAF in Germany and in about 1963 he bought a Polish built Folkboat, 'Forfar', which he initially kept on the Thames off Southend. He was a perfectionist, who liked to know both the theory and the practice of what he was doing came together. This was no more clearly identified than in the way he applied himself to his sailing, navigation and boat construction, both 'Forfar' and his latest boat being testament to his skills of putting theory into practice.

Moving his mooring to the Pagelsham area in the late 1960's brought him into contact with more traditional boat owners and by 1970 he had joined the OGA. Dick quietly went on meeting more East Coast Members who soon appreciated his good seamanship and companionship. It was not long before he was invited to sail here or crew there, and so he participated in a number of East Coast Races, Shotley Festivals and Kent events. With a small number of OGA friends, all usually sailing single handed, he undertook a pilgrimage up the East Coast each year with the aim of visiting all the well known rivers and anchorages.

Having worked for a number of years to improve Forfar's hull and rig to near perfection, Dick then looked round for new projects. His last boat was the Dutch Classic 'Hooze Springer', a steel centre-board yacht built on traditional Dutch lines as designed by Max Gunning, a naval architect to the Royal Netherlands Navy. Typically, Dick was working on this vessel to bring it up to his standard when he became ill and died.

He will be missed by many of us who have happy memories of his friendship and help.

George Jago

Ian Hunter-Edmond. 1921-2007

It is with great regret that I report that Ian Edmond has died at the age of 85. The funeral was at the United Reform Church, with George Jago, Brian Hammett and myself representing the OGA.

He had a very full life, with such diverse interests as Athletics, Rugby, both as a player and referee-ing, a RADA scholarship, and then war service in the RAF as a navigator in Ferry Command bringing unarmed Lancaster to the UK from America among other duties, and of course, his sailing. He was a founder member of the OGA, and served as East Coast Area Secretary in the early 70's. Many of the things we now take for granted were initiatives during his tenure, one of which was the Heineken Rally in 1974- the first East Coast -Dutch event.(remember that when you take part in the Hellevoetsluis Rally this year!) In his later years, he took part in many EC events, sailing Sea Pig all over the Thames Estuary, usually single-handed

He was of the generation that tended to give more than it takes- he was my mentor during my first year of teaching, and he instilled into me the maxim that " children and young people are to be liked, helped, and encouraged, not only driven." It was a new idea in the 60's, but one which I held to for all my years as a teacher.

Sea Pig is to be based at Wrabness this coming season- look out for her, and lets see if Colin sails her as well as his Dad.

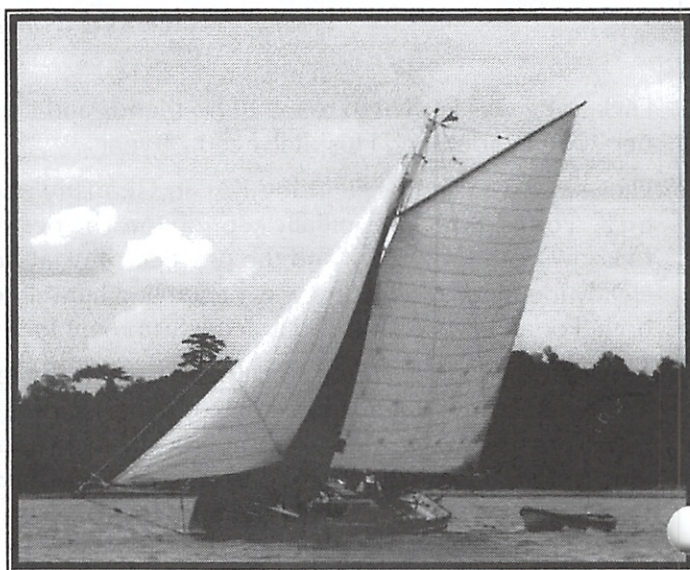
Rob Williamson.

Winter Sailing!

Spare Ribs at the Dikke Mik

"Well, you do all the work, I'll stay in the cabin and write up your citation for the Cape Horn Trophy." That was my response at the London AGM to the Dutch President's invitation to crew his Falmouth Workboat back home from where she had been stranded in the Friesian Islands over the Christmas and New Year.

After a very long ferry and train trip and another ferry trip we joined Ragamuffin, almost alone in a vast yacht harbour at West Terschelling. The Taylor diesel heater, after warming the cabin nicely, started to blow out. "It's just the way we are lying to the wind", Joachim explained. "Bullsh*t", I thought, "That wind is getting stronger!"



Early next morning we set off across the Waddenzee into the grey gloom being driven in by the rising Sou'wester. We aimed to reach the Meep, the deep channel running westwards at near low water, before taking the young flood south coming through Zeegat van Terschelling, then through the half tide channel called the Zuidoostrak, eventually to enter the Ijsellmeer at Kornwernerzand. We sailed towards Vieland before making our southing, hoping to get a lee off the big banks between that island and the mainland. All was going well, and we were on course despite the poor visibility.

But then a weather report came through with winds rising to 7 and the tide a foot lower than predicted. With the waves and less water likely, we abandoned the passage plan, and retraced our steps at vast speed (about 7 Knots over tide and ground!) to the turn off point for the Harlingen Channel. Beam wind it was a fast trip, but with commercial shipping having to crab their way through the channel with high cross wind and tide, the Dutch might have made the channel wider! Lowering sail was done inside the harbour just after we entered. There did not seem a lot of life at the harbour bridge, so we went to the lock at the north of the town and entered the inland waterways system. Just after entering we turned starboard very sharp into a sheltered creek in which there was a small sailing club at the back of the town. The cabin heater was fired up, a joint of Island lamb was consumed and a hostelry sought in town, where we tried to dry out our sodden gear.

The next morning it was blowing a full gale in the wrong direction to reach Kornwernerzand, so Joachim phoned the water authorities to see if the inland route to Stavoren was possible with a standing mast. Yes, it was possible, so we set off down the canal after refuelling from a barge. The first bridge opened as if waiting for us, then called us up on the VHF. Apparently a lift bridge the other side of Leewarden was under construction, and construction pontoons would have to be moved for us to pass. Could we phone them to tell them our ETA? The next bridge along, the bridge keeper came to the bank to ask us if we had got the message, such service! Obviously manoeuvring a yacht in such winds is difficult, but the system was being set up so everything could open as we arrived, the progress of this lone little sailing vessel being telegraphed from bridge to bridge.

The gale to Leewarden was in our favour, so we set the staysail. The speed limit is six knots, this was exceeded considerably at times, great fun swishing past the Friesian countryside. Unfortunately they could not hold up the Dutch Railways for Ragamuffin, so we had to stop at Leewarden for a few minutes. It was hellish mooring up.

Head to wind after Leewarden, motoring full ahead would only give us three knots. The spray from the waves was lashing us, the boat was heeling to the gunwhales at times. It was painful even to look into the wind and hail. Eventually we reached the junction with Princes Margaret Canal, the main commercial canal through Friesland to Germany. On the bank were two guys in a van wanting to know if we needed the bridge opening. Yes said Joachim, he needed twelve for Ragamuffin, so off they drove. We came in sight of the Jachtenbrug, and we could see why they were asking. A big motorway bridge was under construction, and there were no lowering barriers for the traffic. So the workmen had to lay bollards across the road to stop the traffic on this vital road artery, then raise the bridge bascule while this little yacht battled her way through!

It was cold, it was wet and it was very windy as we turned towards the Sneekemeer. On the train-bridge before

the meer, the bridge keeper had called us to say that whilst the wind might go down slightly this evening, it was going to blow something terrible soon and we must find shelter. The cowshit was already blowing off the dykes, if it wasn't washing off in the rain, so we decided to stop at Sneek. The channel was not lit and it was pitch dark. Only the foreign crew had only been there in Deva four years ago, in the fog, navigating off a road map. But we found our way somehow, and worked our way into the town. We carried on until the channel became very narrow and tied up by a little bridge near the centre, sheltered enough for the heater to work. It was chicken for tea, and afterwards Joachim asked his foreign crew where the pubs were. The crew's internal pub guidance system went into archive memory and we ended in a square with two "Brown" pubs facing us. Was it left pub or right pub? Joachim chose left and yes, it was the bar I had left involuntarily four years ago. I even pointed to where I had sat at the bar.

When we returned rather late, Joachim decided to swing the ship in the calm before the storm, so the bowsprit was pointing the right way for an easy exit. The winds were very high indeed, even in our sheltered spot. We visited the museum, which was very interesting, especially on the skating, and visited the right hand pub, which was heaving with many people finishing work. During this time we heard just how bad the wind had been. All the bridges were closed, the railway system had shut down. Reports of damage everywhere, people being killed. Whereas the wind had kept the water away from the Waddenzee when we crossed, the low pressure centre caused a surge of 3.2 metres above predicted levels, and the army was put on standby with sandbags etc to protect the sea dykes.

The next day was just an ordinary gale. After a short passage down the Princess Margaret Canal we turned off for Heeg & Stavoren. Some guys repairing a roof on the canal side shouted at me "You crazy sailors!" How did they know I was English? A rather long bowel movement gave me an opportunity to stay in the cabin whilst Joachim helmed across the Heegemeer, a five mile lake where the waves had built up to sea-like proportions. As we left the lake I noticed our speed over ground was two knots higher than through the water. Seeing a buoy tilting to windward in the current, we realised that we were in something of a mill-race, not nice with wind over tide, not easy to aim through gaps at bridges. Why there was so much water rushing out of Friesland was a mystery- they are used to rain over there!

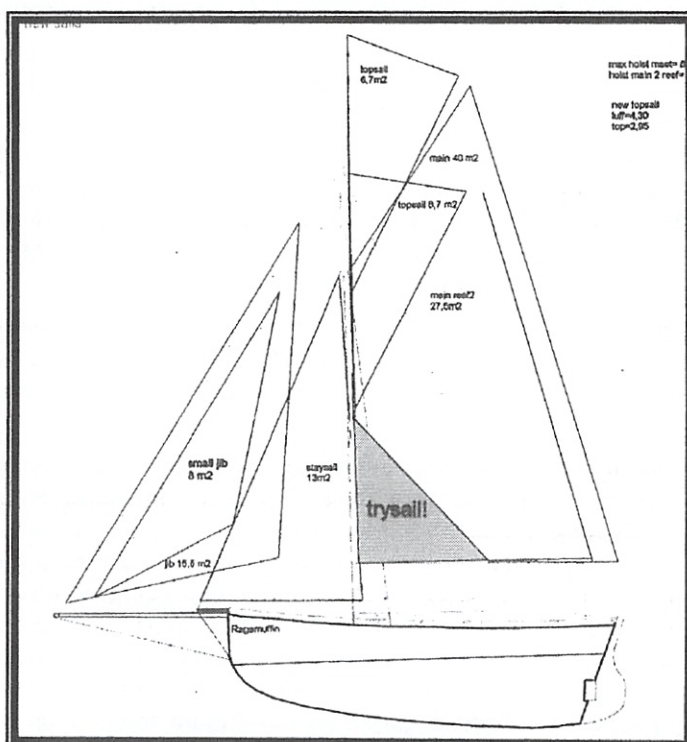
At Stavoren we moored up and listened to the forecast. It was still blowing a gale, but it was forecast to go West for a short while, moderating to 6/7 before it blew up again from the South West. It was sh*t or bust, go now or a very long train journey and no spare ribs. Our confidence was not helped when the bridge mechanism failed to work, but eventually it opened and we locked out into the boiling IJsselmeer.

The onshore waves, always bad at Stavoren with the offshore banks causing disturbance, were bigger than we had ever seen on the IJsselmeer, 6-8 feet high. But my funny tummy immediately felt better as Ragamuffin really rose to the occasion, punching her way through the crests. Nice proper dollops of water hitting the cockpit, rather than just stinging spray! Once clear of the banks, we were able to set the staysail and reach south to Enkhuizen. It was easy sailing despite the waves, Ragamuffin is a sea boat. I was on the point of hinting to Joachim a scrap of mainsail might be nice, but experience on Ragamuffin has taught me that he doesn't do scraps on that mainsail, so I kept quiet! (However check his latest proposed sail plan showing minute trysail!)

As night fall approached we entered Enkhuizen harbour, and moored astern in one of the boxes. I was surprised at the height of the water- normally I can't reach the jetty even at summer level, but our transome was at the same height. That level access facilitated easy access ashore and a quick walk to the Dikke Mik. The waitress didn't have to ask what we wanted to eat. 3 o'clock the next morning and several beers and Irish Coffees later we returned to Ragamuffin.

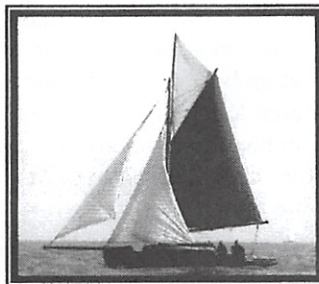
You can't beat a short sailing break in January!

Jon Wainwright

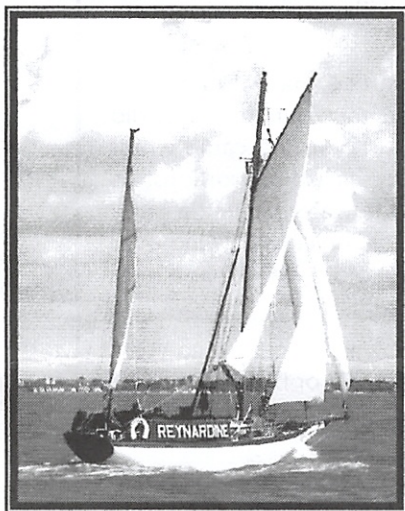


Fleet Review— Maryll to return from Overseas Duty

Fleet Disposals (UK) is pleased to report the sale of Maryll, currently lying mothballed in Enkhuizen. With the Dutch OGA being granted independence, the need to maintain a permanent presence in Dutch waters was considered an unnecessary expense by Fleet Resources. Maryll will be returning to UK waters, to the Isle of Mersea, strengthening the OGA presence in an area of potential local insurrection. (Members may remember an OGA amphibious assault from the 2005 Festival of Sail at Brightlingsea to retake the Island for the OGA, led by your President)



Maryll has had a continuous tour of overseas duty, since she took over from Deva in 2003. She has saved the Dutch economy by breaking the ice on the IJsselmeer so that shipping and fishing could continue all the year round. She was the first vessel to sight "Bird Island" off Medemblik, 27 October 2003, 52deg 46.500min N, 05deg 11.000min E. Having claimed this land for the British Crown, and naming the capital "Devastadt", principal port "Maryllhaven", rights for free mooring and beer were established for the OGA. This little bit of the East Coast in far flung foreign lands will be ceded to the Dutch OGA in 2007 at a special ceremony. Maryll was also only the second UK vessel to reach the secret Dutch Port of Laaxum (the first was Deva), and took part in the Baltic Patrol in 2004.



Of course withdrawal of the East Coast OGA east of Southwold is not without its drawbacks. There may well be unemployment at her old base at the Enkhuizen Submarine Pen, not least amongst the local hostelries. Stena Shipping withdrew its High Speed Ferry from Harwich -Hook on January 8 this year, because of the potential loss of Fleet personnel passenger traffic. Though it is hoped the OGA chair by the bar can be given to the Dutch Maritime Museum.

Meanwhile in the Home Fleet, Deva is ashore, with Fleet Services planning to complete her refit and new cabin top and launch at the end of March. Reynardine is nearing the end of her acceptance trials, and will have a further refit ashore as soon as Deva is re-commissioned. New topsail and staysail are on order from Tollesbury, the addition of these is hoped to bring the vessel up to fleet speed. Reynardine will re-launch in June/July to take part in the North Sea Classic Passage Race and Hellevoetsluis, winter in Enkhuizen before going on Baltic Patrol in 2008.

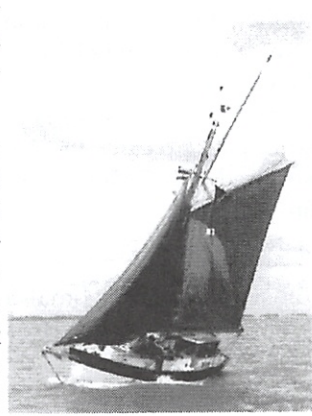
DATABASES AND ALL THAT!

At the AGM in London there emerged some more developments on the OGA Data-base. The Sailing Sub Committee had asked last year that Central set up a proper Boat register in database format and put it on-line. It was also suggested that a Central database, including membership and other Central information could assist with management of the association, with key officers living far apart.

However it was announced in January that the OGA Central were already moving ahead with an on-line database to cover Membership and payment matters. The Boat Register part of the database would be designed and added "Later". At this stage there has been no input from Areas or individual members on how they would like the system to work, but there will be a special "Area Secretaries" Meeting in London on 24 February, where we may get a chance to say what we want.

Whilst some of us would have preferred to have seen everyone's requirements incorporated before a database was designed, rather than altered later, I would ask that anyone who would like any particular issue raised with Central, database or otherwise, to contact me before then.

Turning to the East Coast set-up, we have a local boat register of nearly 900 vessels, but little membership information. Central send us a label list for newsletters, but we don't know anything else. Central Boat register is the same, we can get information on individual boats if we ask, but we don't know what is on there for general reference. Clearly if we were able to access information readily and be able to use it for area purposes, it would be very useful for a busy area like the East Coast. But when and if we get what we need is another matter as things stand. So we have a little bit of a quandary— does the East Coast develop its own system, which we can very quickly with our own website, or do we wait for Central to come up with something?



MENU

East Coast OGA Annual Dinner at the Royal Burnham Yacht Club

Saturday 3 March 2007

PLEASE TICK
YOUR CHOICE

STARTER

ROSE OF MELON WITH GRENADINE & FRESH BERRIES

☐

MAIN COURSE

LAMB SHANKS IN RED WINE JUS, WITH CREAMED
POTATOES AND VEGETABLES

☐

OR

ROAST SALMON IN CITROUS SAUCE, WITH CREAMED
POTATOES AND VEGETABLES

☐

DESSERT

STICKY TOFFEE PUDDING WITH CUSTARD

☐

OR

FRESH FRUIT SALAD

(sugar free)

☐

CHEESE AND BISCUITS

CHEESEBOARD WITH CELERY AND
GRAPES

COFFEE

7.00 PM FOR 7.30 PM

To Denise Rawlinson 24 Russet Way Burnham on Crouch Essex CMO 8RB (*Please return before 26th February—if you can't be sure of the post, please phone 010621 783969 or mobile 07850287035*)

PLEASE BOOK _____ PLACES @ £22.50 per head , CHOICE AS TICKED ABOVE, FOR OGA DINNER
ON 3 MARCH

I ENCLOSE £_____ (INCLUDING £_____ DONATION TO OGA)

NAME OF EACH PERSON ATTENDING:

TELEPHONE NUMBER: