

OGA

EAST COAST GAFFERS

EASTCOASTER

Newsletter of the East Coast OGA



This fourth 'digest' of the online EASTCOASTER includes reports from the very successful OGA60 Jubilee Party on the River Orwell when the East Coast Gaffers were hosts. As the nights draw in, many of us are thinking about laying up for the winter and planning sailing adventures for 2024.

A lively programme of shore-based events follows on from the AGM on 9 December with a talk at Robertsons Boatyard on the River Deben. The Association AGM will be in Liverpool, hosted by NW Gaffers on 13-14 January 2024. Overleaf is a summary of some more dates for 2024.

The EASTCOASTER blog with email updates has been running for a year now, I do hope those of you with Internet access enjoy them. Do drop me a line with your feedback.

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AGM & Winter events

Visit the EC Gaffers website for full details:

www.eastcoastgaffers.org.uk/events-2023/

4 November, 2023 East Coast Area AGM 5pm for 5.30

Royal Harwich Yacht Club

18 November, 2023 Crossfields Conference, Arnside

9 December, 2023 East Coast OGA Winter Talks #1

Join us at Robertsons Boatyard, Woodbridge to hear Cathy Shelbourne talking about the voyages of local 16th century privateer Thomas Cavendish.

13 – 14 January, 2024: Association AGM, Liverpool

Organised by NW Gaffers, full details published in the next issue of Gaffers Log.

Saturday, 9 March, 2024: ECOGA Annual Dinner

Royal Burnham YC

25 – 27 May, 2024: Deben Rally & Cherub Centenary

River Deben, Waldringfield & Woodbridge

7 – 9 June, 2024: Swallows & Amazons

Walton & Frinton YC This ever-popular event will incorporate the postponed Gaffling 4.1 Championships

22 – 23 June, 2024: Southwold Rally

27 July, 2024: East Coast Race

Stone Sailing Club

28 July – 2 August, 2024: OGA NL20 Anniversary

Feeder Event Ramsgate to Vlissingen

Join the Netherlands Tour: 3 – 17 August, 2024 The Dutch OGA organising committee, has invited UK Gaffers to join a celebration of the Dutch OGA 20th Anniversary. The event will start in Hellevoetsluis and end in Enkhuisen. Send an email to inst@xs4all.nl expressing interest and providing your details.



Visit the blog:

www.eastcoastgaffers.org.uk

EASTCOASTER archives:

www.oga.org.uk/areas/east_coast/eastcoaster.html

Send contributions to the Editor by email:

eastcoaster@oga.org.uk

Final events of the season

East Coast Gaffers have enjoyed three events to finish off a busy season celebrating the 60th anniversary of the OGA. These were all events for small boats and cruisers with one taking place across the North Sea in the Netherlands. There's just one report so far . . . and only a few photos. ***If you attend an event, do please think about dropping your Editor a few lines with photos to share with others!***

24 – 25 September: Slaughden Rally

5 – 7 October: Reeuwijk Rally

15 October: Woodbridge Boatyard/Deben YC

Bright blue skies, a lively breeze; what a beautiful day to race gaffers! This afternoon we had the fourth and final race of the season for the Deben Cherubs and assorted classics and traditionals. Four Cherubs, a Cornish Shrimper, a Golant Gaffer, the Everson 11 and a Heron dinghy all turned out. A downwind start followed by windward-leeward sausages along Methersgate Reach were closely fought with the modern boats mixing it amongst the Cherubs. 'Lindy Lou' led home with 'Jubilee' second, the Golant Gaffer would have been second but instead visited the saltmarsh and had to retire. With the Shrimper retiring too, 'Cherub' was third and 'Lynette' a close fourth followed by the dinghies. A great time was had by all! Next year we will do it all again, hopefully with even more boats!

Report: Woodbridge Boatyard



Slaughden Rally Photo: Joe Farrow



Reeuwijk Rally Photos: Marion Shirley



EC OGA featured boats

An East Coast boat is featured each month on the East Coast Gaffers Facebook page and EASTCOASTER blog. If you can, take a look at the additional tales and pictures online. In August, our featured boat was 'Fanny of Cowes' followed by the smacks boat 'Joy' and your Editor's boat 'Cachalot' in October, celebrating her 125th anniversary this year. Do contact the Editor if you have a nomination for a boat to be featured in future.

'Fanny of Cowes': Itchen Ferry

Our featured boat for August is one of the oldest in the OGA fleet at just over 150 years old. She's one of only a few still sailing who took part in the first East Coast OGA Annual Race 60 years ago in 1963. She has an outstanding racing record both on the east coast and Solent where she was built. Built in 1872 as a copy of 'Star,' the champion Itchen Ferry in the 1860's, Fanny was 12" longer at 23' and still sails under her original fishing no. CS12. She was built for the Paskins family of Cowes fish merchants and had various owners to 1938 then lay neglected on the beach. In 1946 she was overhauled, given a new transom, new rigging and sails. At this time, a petrol model T Ford engine was fitted. Laid up in 1948 for ten months, she was then sold for £70. A Coventry Victor engine was fitted in 1958. 'Fanny' was bought by David Cooke of Ipswich in 1959 and sold in 1972.

'Fanny of Cowes' has always had a successful racing record and was keenly raced by Mr. Cooke, making regular appearances in the East Coast Old Gaffers races. Her longevity is probably partly due to the fact that every piece of timber on her was thoroughly soaked in linseed oil by her first owner. She's one of only four boats to take part in the first and 50th Anniversary OGA East Coast races. This year, she attended the OGA60 Jubilee Party on the River Orwell, sailing up from her home port in the the River Blackwater.



, 'Fanny of Cowes' 2018 Photo: Sandy Miller



'Fanny of Cowes' 2006 Photo: Steve Yates



Smacks boat 'Joy' at the East Coast Race, 2023 Photo: Sandy Miller

Smack's boat 'Joy'

Our featured boat for September is 'Joy', winner of the Jubilee East Coast Race for open boats which took place on Sunday, 6 August, 2023 in very windy conditions. Unusually for our featured boats, her owner is not an East Coast member but trails 'Joy' to OGA events around the country – a great advantage of having a boat which can travel on a trailer!

'Joy' may certainly be regarded as an 'East Coast' boat though, being a Brian Kennell Smack Boat, popular with many Gaffers on the East Coast and further afield.

A few years ago, her owner, Steve Mitchell, wrote in OGA Gaffers Log: *"At OGA55 I managed to get a sail in Pete Thomas' smack boat. I was really taken in by the simplicity of it. Having bought a campervan, sailing and camping were fighting for my attention. Maybe the answer was to combine the two. In October 2018 I put my Crabber 24 on the market, she sold in 28 days."*

I ordered a new Smack boat from Brian Kennell. This meant my 2019 sailing season was going to be a bit lacking due to the build time. When August came, so did my shining new dinghy. The ability to tow my new boat meant I took no time at all in getting afloat. After a couple of successful camping/sailing trips to Cobnor in Chichester Harbour, I was pleased to see that the East Coast OGA were arranging a rally at Aldeburgh. Excited at the prospect of introducing 'Joy' to some East Coast mud I so lovingly grew up in, I duly registered."



Suffolk YH in the rain, 2023 Photo: Steve Mitchell

‘Cachalot’ a Kentish smack yacht

Our featured boat for October is ‘Cachalot’, built as a yacht in Folkestone, Kent 1898 and celebrating her 125th anniversary in 2023. East Coast Gaffer, Steve Yates undertook the restoration and rebuild of this beautiful yacht on the banks of the River Deben, Suffolk, 200 miles away from his home in the hills of rural Derbyshire. After ten years under a tent, she was relaunched in 2017 at the Tidemill Yacht Harbour, Woodbridge, Suffolk. She joined the East Coast Gaffers OGA60 celebrations on the River Orwell, taking part in the Parade of Sail and East Coast Race.



‘Cachalot’ becomes a project, 2007



‘Cachalot’ takes part in the East Coast Race, 2023 Photo: Jeff Welch

‘Cachalot’ has an interesting history of illustrious as well as more ordinary owners interspersed with periods of neglect, including at least two sinkings. She has spent most of her life on the East Coast of England, but after cruising the west coast of Scotland in the early 1950s, her owner tired of the weather and took her to the Mediterranean. The voyage is reported in ‘Yachting Monthly’ by Brigadier E E Nott-Bower, her owner and contributor to the magazine. In 1940 she responded to the call to action and took part in the Dunkirk evacuation ‘Operation Dynamo’. As a member of the Association for Dunkirk Little Ships (ADLS) she joined the ‘Return to Dunkirk’ in 1990. In 2009 she received a restoration award from the Transport Trust and in 2019 was nominated for the ‘Classic Boat Magazine Restoration Award (under 40)’. In 2022, she won the Concours d’Elegance Trophy at the East Coast OGA Annual Summer Cruise.

As members of the OGA, there was plenty of local support during the restoration project. Find the full story of her restoration along with tales of sailing past and present on her website:

www.cachalot.org.uk

OGA60 Jubilee Party on the East Coast

The East Coast OGA were hosts to the OGA60 Jubilee Party, welcoming the Round Britain Cruise fleet, to celebrate for four days on the River Orwell.

Look back at where the OGA60 Round Britain Cruise has been, along with ‘historic tales of sail’ online: www.sailing-by.org.uk

Over 100 boats with 320 skippers, crews, family and friends travelling by sea, road, rail or ferry arrived on the River Orwell, Wednesday 2 August, 2023. They came to welcome the return of the OGA60 Round Britain Cruise boats and celebrate 60 years of the OGA. As more and more boats arrived into ABP Beacon Marina, Ipswich the OGA welcoming committee, clad in bright orange t-shirts, were ably assisted with berthing new arrivals by a team of ABP staff, wearing their corporate orange hi-viz. There was a buzz of excitement as the VHF crackled, indicating another group of boats was approaching the lock. Pete Thomas, East Coast OGA Committee member, had made a careful assessment of who could raft against whom to fill the available spaces cleared by ABP for the event. Skippers hoisted their bunting and a party atmosphere began to grow as late arrivals were squeezed into their berths.



Gathering in Ipswich Photo: Beverley Yates

The Party started in earnest on Thursday with a Civic Reception, sponsored by Associated British Ports (ABP) and Ipswich Borough Council, addressed by the Mayor of Ipswich, Councillor Lynne Mortimer. Assisted by Paul Masters, Vice President of the East Coast OGA, the Mayor awarded individual plaques to each OGA60 RBC skipper, commemorating their achievement.

Visit the blog for full reports:
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Send contributions to the
Editor by email:
eastcoaster@oga.org.uk



Civic Reception, Ipswich Photo: Erik Frenks

The Reception was followed by an excellent supper at Party HQ, the recently restored, deconsecrated St Clement's Church, formerly one of the mariners' churches of Ipswich and looked after by the Ipswich Historic Churches Trust. The after-dinner speaker was dialect coach, hired by Netflix to train actors in the Suffolk accent for 'The Dig', Charlie Haylock.

On Friday morning, bright and early, BBC Radio Suffolk arrived to record the first of three interviews broadcast throughout the morning. Although starting bright and sunny, there were warnings of a change in the weather as skippers began to think about preparing to leave for the Parade of Sail while the lock was on 'free flow'. Untangling all the careful rafting from Wednesday, striking the bunting and deciding about how many reefs may be needed, 80 classic yachts and working boats slowly departed ABP Beacon Marina.



Parade of Sail, 2023 Photo: Jeff Welch

OGA60 Parade of Sail, 4 August 2023

The following is an extract from a report by Solent Gaffer, Ben Collins who towed his dinghy to the OGA60 celebrations on the East Coast, crewing on 'Cachalot' for the Parade of Sail.

I was welcomed as 'deckhand' aboard the good ship 'Cachalot'. My quiet moustachioed and bearded skipper gave me a quick tour of the ropes as we waited for the Admiral's signal. The tide, as always, was in charge of timings. It was late morning before engines started to cough into life and boats manoeuvred out of tight berths only to then clutter the harbour pending the lock gates opening to set us free. Eventually we started to move, passing through the outer docks and downriver as the weather began to show signs of change. The blue sky was being overpowered by bigger clouds and the breeze was picking up. As I watched the line of boats astern, ominous grey clouds were towering up to the west. I realised this was not a part of the country whose weather signs I knew well and the low rumble of thunder was surely miles inland.



Illustration: Solent Gaffer, Ben Collins

Conditions on the water were relaxed as we picked up a handy mooring buoy just upstream of the Orwell bridge. We pulled on the halyards as a gust of wind rattled our rigging and the mainsail was sent aloft. From the shore the fleet must have presented a fine spectacle, sails of all colours and shapes were soon criss-crossing the sound, ducking and diving between each other and moving on under the mighty Orwell bridge. Now the wind was coming in small gusts as boats surged forward for a minute or two then sat becalmed. This time the thunder was sharper and nearer. We motored down to find our position in the brewing air. The light dimmed as the looming greyness over the city rolled towards us. As we cut our engine crews were at work reefing down in anticipation.

The sky was soon completely dark above us and the air went still. The lull before the storm?

Then something from nowhere specific, a curtain of white mist appeared above the bridge. Soon the whiteness filled much of the sky, swallowing first the riverbank then one end of the bridge itself. One by one the boats behind were engulfed and our mottled parade was losing a whole section of its tail! The water near us turned dark and flat calm. Then from all around came the hissing. Faint at first, but growing louder as a sharp line of whiteness travelled towards us. Paralysis set in as boats stood still and crews watched on. The hissing grew louder as the curtain got closer and enveloped the masts and sails immediately astern. Each of them sucked away as if by magic. The water over our stern boiled up white, itself disappearing into the pervasive mist. We were caught in the maelstrom! Rain rods crashed down on us, lashing the deck. Water cascading down our sails and pitching in a waterfall before sluicing along our decks and into the scuppers. Visibility lost completely!

Report: Ben Collins, Solent Area

Photos: Sandy Miller



OGA60 East Coast Race

The weather gods were unkind to the Old Gaffers' Association 60th anniversary celebrations, with epic downpours and very strong winds making things as difficult as possible throughout the four-day event. It seemed that the big race, planned to be the highlight on the final day, Sunday 6, August, might not happen at all. But the weather forecasters promised a slight moderation and it was agreed that the race would start later, in the hope that things might settle a little, and that it should be a river course, rather than heading out to sea as originally intended.



'Letty' enjoys the East Coast Race Photo: Beverley Yates



'Jan Blank', visiting from the Netherlands, races on the Orwell Photo: Beverley Yates

Host club Haven Ports YC is fortunate that starting from the club line at Levington on the River Orwell a course can be set downriver to Harwich Harbour and then up the River Stour to Erwardon and return, which tests all points of sail, in relatively sheltered water, no matter what the wind direction. So this was the obvious choice, in the gusty north westerly. The race team, better sheltered in their hut on the line than they would have been on a committee boat, were impressed that despite the still challenging conditions, 25 boats turned out for the start. They sympathised with those who chose to stay in the marina, but admired the determination of those gaffers of all ages, shapes and sizes wanting to race.



East Coast Race, 2023 Photo: Sandy Miller

The fleet was split into six classes, workboat, modern and racers, classics (slow and fast) and spirit of tradition (slow and fast). Altogether they made an impressive sight. Originally it had been intended to start the large and fast workboats last, but with safety in mind, they were sent away first.

They looked magnificent, but unfortunately 'Letty', biggest and most impressive of all, ran aground just before the start (fortunately there was a rising tide throughout the race) and again shortly afterwards, eventually finishing in last place on corrected time. She was awarded the Old Gaffers Trophy for sticking it out.



'Letty' Photo: Sandy Miller

The rest of the boats all started together. In the choppy waters most treated the start line with understandable caution. Surprisingly only five boats retired from the race, in what remained extremely challenging conditions, particularly on the upwind legs, with wind against tide. It was by all accounts a very wet race, even though the rain just about held off.

The eventual winner was the aptly-named 'Charm', one of the most photogenic entries, from the slow classics class.

Only a fraction of a second behind her on corrected time came the very different 'Dirty Girty' from the modern and racers fleet; a low-freeboard speed machine that required agile crewing. Invited to join 'DG' as crew was OGA sponsor, Lance Whitehead, CEO of Dartmouth Gin. 'My Quest', another slow classic was third, followed by 'Lahloo' (spirit of tradition fast) and 'Fable' (classics fast). In sixth place on handicap was the first of the workboats, the stunning 'Fanny of Cowes'. Line honours were taken by 'Hardy', from the classics fast fleet, which finished the course in three hours and 22 minutes.

Report: Haven Ports Yacht Club Race Team, Suffolk Yacht Harbour, Levington



Solent Golant Gaffer 'Satellite' Photo: Beverley Yates



Classic Bermudan 'Tannhauser' Photo: Beverley Yates

Blog, Facebook, print and email options

The EASTCOASTER blog contains news of interest to EC Members. Every registered EC OGA Member receives a regular email with updates and links to new content online. The EC Gaffers Facebook page is also updated regularly.

A quarterly PDF digest of posts is available, maintaining our legacy of EASTCOASTER going back to 1994. Browse or download to print past issues on the Association EC website: www.oga.org.uk/areas/east_coast/eastcoaster.html

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