



EASTCOASTER

Newsletter of the East Coast OGA



Beverley helms 'Cachalot' with husband, Steve, EC Summer Cruise, 2022

A new Editor rings in changes, 2023

As more East Coast Gaffers use the Internet, EASTCOASTER will have a new format for 2023. At the East Coast AGM, November 2022, Beverley Yates volunteered to be East Coast Gaffers EASTCOASTER Editor, taking over from Alison Cable. Alison became Editor for the February 2013 issue (our 50th Anniversary year). She took over from Bernard Patrick, who had undertaken the role since 2007, on the death of John Wainwright. I'm sure everyone will agree, Alison has done a sterling job with a lively Newsletter arriving promptly every three months. We wish her well as she settles into life in Scotland, where she and Julian keep 'Robinetta' in view from their breakfast room window.

Thankyou from all the East Coast Gaffers, Alison!

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Alison, outgoing Editor, helms 'Robinetta' through the Kyles of Bute

Blog, print, facebook and email options

The EASTCOASTER blog will contain news of interest to EC Members. Every registered East Coast OGA Member will receive a regular email with updates and links to new content on the blog: www.eastcoastgaffers.org.uk. The East Coast Gaffers Facebook page will also be updated regularly.

Please contribute your stories to help keep us all informed!

For those who still like the option of 'download to print', a quarterly digest of posts will be available, maintaining our legacy of EASTCOASTER going back to 1994! You can browse past issues on the Association EC website page: www.oga.org.uk/areas/east_coast/about.html

For £5 per annum, East Coast Members may also opt in to having a printed copy of EASTCOASTER mailed to them on a quarterly basis. Send your cheque and request for this service to Clare Thomas:

Green Farm Barn, Barham Green, Ipswich, Suffolk IP6 0QF.

If you have an email address, and would like to receive the monthly mailings, or you have changed your email address, please make sure Colin Stroud, Association Secretary, has your details. Contact Colin by email: secretary@oga.org.uk



'Cachalot' leaves the Deben, 2022

Visit the blog:
www.eastcoastgaffers.org.uk

EASTCOASTER archives:
www.oga.org.uk/areas/east_coast/about.html

Forthcoming events

Keep an eye on the website for up to date information
www.oga.org.uk/areas/east_coast/events

Saturday 25 February at 6.30pm **Winter social: £7.50 inc. refreshments**

Winter Social with a talk by sketch book sailor Claudia Myatt on her Antarctic and Southern Ocean travels.
 Sprat Shed, Robertsons Boatyard, Woodbridge, IP12 1BD

Saturday 1 April **Annual Dinner: £35 per person**

Annual Dinner at Royal Burnham Yacht Club.
 Join us for a posh dinner and swap sailing plans for the summer. Please phone Trev Rawlinson: 01621 783969, to book accommodation at the Yacht Club.

28 April - 1 May **RBC60 Start at Ramsgate**

Ramsgate is the official 'start' of RBC60. Participating boats will rendezvous at Ramsgate, with optional overnight visit to Sandwich. Other OGA members are welcome to come by boat or road to Ramsgate to wave off the fleet. Join the crews for an evening meal ashore to wish them well.

3 - 4 June **Swallows and Amazons Rally**

Our premier open boat event! Join us at Walton & Frinton YC to race around the Island, and explore the Backwaters.

3 - 6 August **OGA60 Jubilee Party based at Ipswich & Levington**

The East Coast OGA are hosting the big celebration for our Diamond Jubilee to coincide with the end of the Round Britain Challenge. We have four days of sailing and land based activities for cruising boats, trailer sailers and dinghies, as well as members who come by land to join the fun!

Sunday 6 August, East Coast Race

This year the East Coast Race will be the culmination of the OGA60 Jubilee Party celebrations at Levington on the River Orwell. Racing will take place in Pennyhole Bay. Prizes will be plentiful as we have some generous sponsors for the event!





'Dipper' being prepared to trail

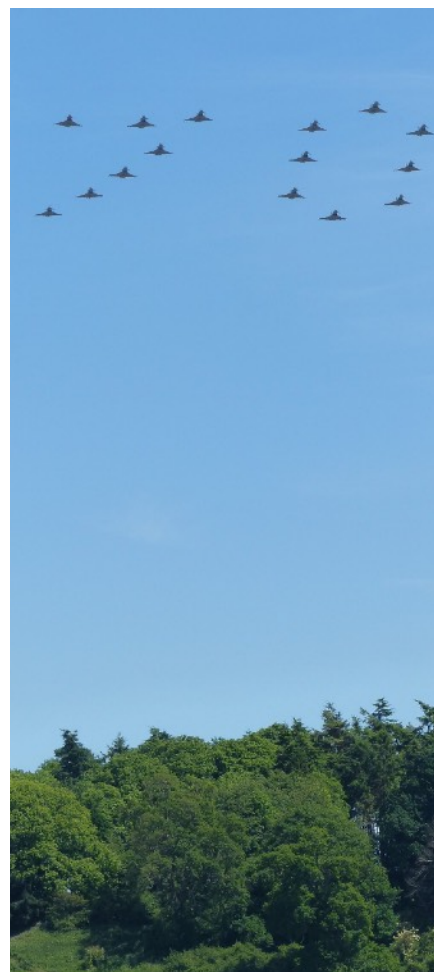
'Dipper' on the Deben

Keith McIlwain, SW Gaffer, hopes to move to Suffolk and towed his boat up last summer to join the Deben Jubilee Rally.

At the end of May, 2022 I decided that the time had come to take 'Dipper' to Suffolk. This decision was in anticipation of our house move there from Somerset. As I write in December, this has fallen through, but we continue to try!

Being just 16' long and less than 500kg, 'Dipper' is a joy to tow compared to other larger boats I've trailed previously. It was a little over 200 miles door to door but surprisingly relaxing due to the fact that most of the journey was undertaken at a leisurely 55-60 mph. Early on the morning of 2 June I towed 'Dipper' to the slipway at Bawdsey Quay. I launched single handed, and not without incident. It was to be the first of many 'incidents' that took place during the weekend, that I won't detail here.

As I sailed upstream on the flood tide, 'Dipper' was joined by 'Transcur' and 'My Quest' sailing round from Pin Mill and Harwich Harbour. Having rendered the outboard useless on launching at Bawdsey, I had to sail onto the mooring allocated



Jubilee flypast, Sue Lewis



A fleet of small gaffers grace the River Deben, Colin Stroud

to 'Dipper' at Waldringfield, immediately in front of the packed garden of the Maybush Inn! All went to plan thankfully, and just as I prepared to do so I was rewarded by the sight of the Jubilee flypast which had formed up somewhere over the North Sea, before making its way to London to salute the Queen. It was one of those magical, never to be forgotten, moments. In all nearly 30 boats took part in the weekend activities, which commenced on Thursday evening with a most enjoyable barbecue on Waldringfield Quay.

On Friday the fleet set off down river with the prospect of fish and chips for lunch and convivial chat at Felixstowe Ferry. We enjoyed a great sail down to Felixstowe Ferry in the morning, propelled as we were by a stiff breeze. The return journey can best be described as exhilarating. A gusty force 5 was dealt with by taking in both reefs of the mainsail and half rolling the jib. Thankfully 'Dipper' proved sure footed in the conditions, although I did quickly discover that one doesn't cleat the mainsail on a Yachting Monthly Senior. She is definitely more 'dinghy' than 'yacht'.

On Saturday the fleet sailed upriver to Woodbridge Boatyard (formerly Everson's) to celebrate the 100th birthday of 'Clytie', a 30' gaff cutter built there for Clifford Paterson in 1922 and



Dinghy launch, Sue Lewis



'Clytie' celebrates 100 years on the Deben, Beverley Yates

now owned by his great-granddaughter. I was directed to a vacant buoy by one of the boatyard team before being ferried ashore by a kindly East Coast Gaffer (I met many over the weekend). The visit to the boatyard also provided the opportunity to celebrate the launch of a lovely 11-foot clinker sailing dinghy newly built by traditional methods to the lines of an old Everson design.

This was the first new, traditionally-built, wooden boat built at the yard since the 1960s.

I was able to stay at the celebration just long enough to be able to toast 'Clytie' and 'her' family before asking to be ferried out to 'Dipper' once again. I needed to ensure that I reached Bawdsey Quay with sufficient water to recover her to her trailer and return home. It was a glorious sail down, almost the entire length of the river, and was a fitting end to a most enjoyable weekend.

Keith McIwain



'Dipper' on the Deben, Colin Stroud

Gaffers beer-tasting

Sue Lewis reports on the beer tasting held on 3 December, 2022 in preparation for selection of a special anniversary ale for OGA60.

There was serious business to be done at the Briarbank Brewery – honestly! But that did not get in the way of 14 East Coast old Gaffers having a really good evening, representing seven gaff rigged boats which are all safely tucked up for the winter. Briarbank Brewery have agreed to produce a special brew next summer, for OGA60, so the reason (excuse?) for this gathering in Ipswich on Saturday 3 December, 2022 was to sample some beers and decide what sort of brew would be suitable. Predominantly attended by Essex Gaffers (with a sprinkling of Suffolk representation) the majority travelled to Ipswich by train, which was quite a jolly outing in itself. From Harwich (hosting a contingent from further afield) and Mistley, with one change at Manningtree, and then a brisk walk into town where the microbrewery sits near the docks with its bar above.

First taster for most was Briar Bitter which is their stock session ale, a traditional English bitter and just 3.7% ABV. This met with all-round approval, and Grapefruit IPA (4.5%) was another popular brew – a fresh and fruity summer beer. Pete the Knife made copious tasting notes on his beer mat and whilst sampling Perpendicular (4.4%, a golden ale) informed us that he and colleagues had invented the word “horidicular” – a useful technical term to note. Fortunately we all remained vertical, and although a slight challenge to this was presented by Insanity Claus (6% – dark Belgian style), the real threat lay with 11% imperial porter interestingly named Grounds for Divorce. Third of a pint measures are available!

After a pre-ordered supper, head brewer Rob Pyke joined us for an informal chat about beers and brewing. He impressed us all with his knowledge and enthusiasm as well as his keenness to provide us with a good brew for OGA60. It was thought that a summery beer might be best for our events but also that some input from our younger members should be sought, so no decisions have been made yet – perhaps the perfect excuse to have another tasting session. Many thanks to the committee for a great winter event – please let’s do it again.

Sue Lewis



Photos: Briarbank Brewery



'Suffling' sailing at Tollesbury, photo Sandy Miller

Contact Pete Thomas
for more information
about the Gafflings:
p.m.thomas@talk21.com

A winter project?

Two OGA Gaffling 4.1 dinghies have already been built and launched, but would you prefer to build your own? If you need a winter project, there's probably time to get one ready for the summer! 'Suffling' was built in Suffolk by Pete Thomas ably assisted by a team of East Coast Gaffers. Look out for some pictures of the 'Essling', built in Essex . . .

The OGA60 Anniversary Rally on the River Orwell in August, 2023 will host the first ever Gaffling 4.1 Championships. Who will be the first Gaffling dinghy champion? Gafflings will be available to hire on the Saturday for a series of heats before the Championship racing on Sunday, but if you hurry you could build your own!

'Ettie' and 'Sonamara'

Tarquin reflects on the summer of 2022 as he recovers from a hip replacement. 2023 won't go quite as planned and he offers best wishes to everyone taking part in the OGA60 Round Britain Cruise.

'Sonamara' and I had a great 2022 season sailing when I had the chance. We took part in the smacks race at Tollesbury with 'Ettie', could have done with some more wind, but what a lovely day full of blue skies. June found us at Waldingfield in the mother ship, when we had a lovely sail up the River Deben. It was great to see so many boats with Jubilee bunting. We picked up a swinging mooring, after catching up with an OGA member and enjoyed an excellent barbecue.





'Ettie' sailing at Tollesbury, photo: Sandy Miller

With plenty of wind at Swallows and Amazons we had a laugh. I have to say it was a bit lively, but I had a great sail with my son. Conditions meant the race was shortened as we reached the final buoy to turn round and really went for it on a good run. Everything was set, we braved it and did not put a reef in! That will teach us. Just as we got back into Titchmarsh I remember telling my son, 'Whatever you do don't lean over to the starboard side.' Catching up nicely with our pals, disaster struck. You guessed it, the dreaded sea coming in over the gunnel and, too late, we were gone over.

I was looking forward to the preparations for the OGA60 Round Britain Cruise. Unfortunately that's abandoned due to having an operation I've waited three and a half years for. During my recuperation I've put 'Sonamara' on the hard, had my last sail, stepped our mast and taken it home to keep me busy. Whilst completely chairridden I thought I would attempt to paint a picture on slate with enamel paints. I pretended I was sailing around the UK and here it is.

Fair winds to all of you going round the UK in 2023.

Tarquin Wildridge





EC OGA AGM reports & awards

The East Coast OGA AGM was held on 19 November, 2022 at the Walton & Frinton Yacht Club. We're most grateful to the Club for making us so welcome, providing facilities for the meeting and serving an excellent supper for everyone.

President's Report

I'll try to be reasonably brief as I'm sure most of you are fully apprised of the year's events by Eastcoaster & the website. 2022 has seen a further move towards normality as Zoom Committee Meetings have given way to actual Face to face meetings at Stour Sailing Club as the year has progressed. Meetings have in reality become hybrid occasions, with some meeting in person, while others can join on Zoom. We managed a most enjoyable Burnham Dinner, thanks to Trevor & Elaine, after last year's AGM, but otherwise our winter program centred on the 'Boatbuilders' Futtocks', our East Coast virtual pub. Members who attended the Association AGM in Newcastle voted it a great success, despite numbers being somewhat depleted thanks to Covid.

Sailing events began with the Tollesbury small boat rally, where the Gaffling 'Suffling' accounted for herself very well. The second East Coast Gaffling, 'Essling' also took to the water this season.

Both are now available for members to use, so why not give them a try? The late Queen's Jubilee weekend saw the OGA gather on the Deben, where they celebrated another landmark occasion, 'Clytie's 100th birthday, all the more special for her having spent her 100 years in the ownership of one family!

Sailing continued with Swallows & Amazons, the East Coast Race at Stone, and a Summer Cruise which ended at another 100th birthday party, this time at Lowestoft, for 'Excelsior'. The Stour Rally and Norfolk Broads small boat events, rounded off the East Coast OGA sailing programme.

We hope to offer a 'less virtual' winter programme this year, starting with a beer tasting at Isaac's Briarbank Brewery in Ipswich on 3 December, where we have the opportunity to choose our preferred style of beer for next summer's Jubilee Party for which a Gaffers celebration brew is planned. It seems like too good an opportunity to miss as a winter event enabling the committee to draw on the membership's undisputed depth of experience in beer tasting!

Hopefully we can look forward to a fairly full programme for 2023, with the OGA60 Jubilee Celebrations taking centre stage, but more of that later. Already, a lot of hard

work has gone into this, for which I'd like to thank our Committee and indeed the extended OGA60 committee for all their help.

Sadly we lost two long standing East Coast members during the year. Graham Wadeson, who for a number of years served as our minutes secretary, or 'scribe' as he described himself, died suddenly this summer. In October David Lewin passed away peacefully at home on West Mersea, where his funeral was held a few days ago. They will both be greatly missed and our sympathies go out to both families.

Robert Hill, President, East Coast OGA



Awards

Mike McCarthy: work on the EC Race

Yvonne Mitchell: Batemans Tower

Alison & Julian Cable: Francis B Cooke

Secretary's Report

Hello everyone, it is good to see you this evening. This year, things have felt like they are getting 'back to normal', as they say, which is a blessing. I'll try not to repeat what the President has just said too much, but an awful lot of my secretarial time this past year has been spent dealing with all things OGA60 and our forthcoming Jubilee Party next year. Our OGA60/Jubilee Committee has grown over the last 12 months and we are grateful to those members the President just mentioned, who have kindly joined the existing team. They have put a lot of hours in between them. Thank you.

If you thought it might be a daunting task to arrange such an event as this, at the best of times, try and imagine the added complications of spiralling inflation, contractors reluctant to quote and as yet, working with unknown numbers of attendees! The Committee deserves a big thank you for persevering and attending a huge number of Committee Meetings over the year. Thankyou! It's probably going to notch up yet!

We have maintained a steady flow of new members throughout the year which is encouraging and a warm welcome to all. Please can I ask for nominations for the Annual OGA Awards to be made asap, either to myself to forward on, or direct to the Association Secretary, Colin Stroud. If you take a look at the website you will be able to study the various categories.

Lorna Hill, Secretary, East Coast OGA



Report from the Association AGM

The Gaffers' National AGM 2023, organised by the Solent OGA, was held during the weekend 13 - 15 January at the Holiday Inn, Portsmouth, close to the nautical centre of this seafaring city. Early arrivals were able to take a harbour tour on RAF Sea Plane tender 1502. Members also undertook a private tour of ongoing restorations on Nelson's flag ship HMS Victory; a massive project expected to last for 20 years. Members then repaired to the hotel bar, swapping tales with counterparts from all OGA areas and sharing a convivial fish and chip supper.

Saturday saw meetings for some whilst others took the opportunity of visiting other parts of the Naval Dockyard including the Mary Rose exhibition, walking Southsea Common,

ascending the Spinnaker Tower or even shopping at Gunwharf Quays.

East Coast members were prominent at the AGM itself with Mike Beckett elected as President in this, our 60th Jubilee Year. Membership had declined (slightly) and so subs were raised (slightly). We discussed our social media profile, cockpit cards, WhatsApp communication, small boat events, Gafflings (two of which reside in East Anglia) and the OGA Boat Register. Lorna, our Secretary, gave a hilarious account of plans for the Jubilee Party on the Orwell marking the culmination of the Round Britain Cruise.

Sunday morning saw many members embark on a fascinating tour of the restorations in Boathouse 4 and a final lunch for some before we headed back to our various areas.

Marion Shirley



East Coast Award winners

Several Members of the East Coast Gaffers were nominated for National Awards, presented at the AGM in Portsmouth, January 2023.

Poppy Curtis: Alan Hidden Memorial Trophy for best outstanding performance for an under 25-year-old

Firstly, there is a huge lack of young female skippers, so when there is one, they stand out. This young woman caught my eye as she was skippering the wonderful Gladys through the fleet at the East Coast Race. Not one for being up the front, she helmed her with great confidence and she was going like a train despite not being the usual skipper onboard, her helming style was one of an experienced bawley sailor - not as a novice at the helm.

This same skipper took her to the Excelsior celebrations up with Lowestoft. Bawleys don't like rough weather. It was very rough when the race was underway. This skipper took the bawley out and did extremely well, sadly the results didn't quite reflect the reality of what happened on the water but she was up there in the leader-board.

They have cruised extensively around the East Coast and is one of the only bawleys now to attend many events. Sailed by the family, lightly crewed but always smiling.

So I would like to nominate Poppy Curtis, for someone who is very modest about their ability but shows great promise that the future of skilfully sailing bawleys is in safe hands. It's not easy getting a bawley to sail well, especially in adverse weather conditions, but Poppy seems to do it with effortless ease and long may it continue.

Elly Rule: Gaffers Tales Award for best contribution to Gaffers Log with complementary online content

The Tales of Sail Award was first presented in 2018, the 55th Anniversary year of the OGA, to recognise the increase in high quality articles submitted to Gaffers Log, often complemented by online content. 'Tales of Sail' is awarded for a contribution to Gaffers Log with direct complementary, extended content online. The purpose of the Award is to encourage promotion of the OGA across print and online media. In 2022 the Award goes to Elly Rule, in recognition of her sterling work as online Editor for the Association since 2020. She has managed the OGA website and developed a large following on Instagram and Facebook, as well as contributing to Gaffers Log. Her writing and use of social media bring to life the true spirit of 'sailing gaffers' and what the OGA stands for whether it's stowboating on an Essex smack, racing on the East Coast rivers, sharing experiences with other skippers and crews or just having great fun out on the water.

Steve & Beverley Daley-Yates: Gaffers Tales Award for best contribution to Gaffers Log

One which stands out to me is the tale of 'Cachalot' by Steve and Beverley Yates. Indeed, Beverley's constance (and indeed patience) in helping me to get the article to print, stood out in itself. What they have accomplished with 'Cachalot' is impressive. Having the tenacity to keep going and save her from a watery grave, after sinking. Pulling through what must have been a fairly testing restoration and becoming a proactive member of the East Coast fleet once again.

Gus Curtis: for a President's Commendation to recognise any act, achievement or contribution worthy of note and congratulation.

After a fantastic sail to the Swale, the crew onboard the Essex Smack 'ADC' had asked a fellow smack friend to reserve a buoy for their late arrival. Knowing they would miss the skippers' briefing and the thought of putting down the anchor suitable for any cruise ship, was daunting. Alas, the pub called and we moored her onto the buoy and placed our friends alongside.

After a brief spell ashore, a call was made and it was our friend's dad. He was out in the Swale onboard his bawley when he managed to catch quite a lot more than he bargained for. Our buoy had dragged, and as we rowed out in double quick time, we saw he had managed to catch them both as they slipped past him at anchor. Embarrassingly for us, I jumped aboard, gave an almighty thankful hug (much to his surprise I hasten to add) and we picked up the buoy, put it back where it belonged and then proceeded to drop the

anchor, which we should have done originally, and spent the night onboard safely in the knowledge we were more likely to drag Sheppey into the channel than drag our anchor. Lesson learned there. But this tale doesn't end there.

As we got home at low water to drop the crew off for deadlines, both skippers on the smacks had to await the tide to get back into their tidal mud berth at the Aldous Heritage dock in Brightlingsea. A late night was ahead, and first in was 'ADC'. Sadly, whilst manoeuvring her engine cut out. In the darkness, there he was again. The owner of the bawley was there holding her head in his tender whilst we mucked around with filters and alarms. Her engine turned over and luckily for him, he got away quickly in his tender so he missed out on another "I'm ever so eternally grateful" hug.

In one weekend, Gus and the lovely bawley 'Gladys' caught us twice. He was so modest about what he had done but he had definitely saved my bacon. Without him, the ending of these stories could've been very different.

2022 OGA Photography Competition: East Coast winners



'Onward of Ito, crossing the Channel', Loic le Marchand 1st prize: Sailing Gaffers



'White sails, grey sky, the elegant Cachalot', by Paul Masters



'T Time 'Barbarossa' by Robert Hart



'Concentrate' by Paul Masters

Several East Coast OGA members and boats featured in the OGA Photography Competition Awards, 2022, also announced at the AGM in January 2023. The judge was Sandy Miller.

First Place, Sailing Gaffers category Loic Le Marchand, a Solent Gaffer but 'Onward of Ito' sails out of Greenwich and her skipper is an East Coast Gaffer.

Second Place, Sailing Gaffers category Tony Pickering

Noteworthy photographers

Paul Masters, Josh Masters and Robert Hart



'Alberta CK318 & fleet' OGA East Coast race 2022, Tony Pickering 2nd prize: Sailing Gaffers



'Back in Time, Varuna' by Josh Masters

EC OGA featured boats

We'll be featuring an East Coast boat each month on the East Coast Gaffers Facebook page and the EASTCOASTER blog. If you can, take a look at the additional tales on the blog. The first two celebrated significant birthdays last year; 'Clytie' was 100 and 'Kelpie II' was 120 years old.

'Clytie', Waldringfield, River Deben

2022 was a great sailing year for 'Clytie' and her crew. We celebrated her centenary on several occasions with family and with our OGA friends on the Deben at The Woodbridge Boat Yard (previously Eversons) and on the Summer Cruise in Lowestoft, 100 years on from the first log entry when Jo's Great Grandparents sailed 'Clytie' on their first summer holiday. Boat ownership is an emotional journey. The old adage *'the best day in your life is the day you buy your boat and the day you sell her....'* may not always be true?

How long will you own a boat, or in the case of many of the older vessels on the East Coast become the transient custodian? Five years and then you are drawn to a larger or smaller boat, ten years and then maybe you retire from sailing, 20 years and hope she might be sailed on by a family member. Who knows if the family will have the passion and drive to commit blood, sweat, tears and the treasure that goes to keeping our boats sailing. And those of us who have owned a boat for many years start to feel that the boat starts to own us.

100 hundred years is a long human life and a congratulatory letter from the sovereign. For her centenary, we bought 'Clytie' a new suit of sails from Jeckells and we certainly noticed and enjoyed the difference in her sailing performance. The wheel of time turns inexorably on, but as the late Jon Wainwright said, *'there are only so many tides....'*

'Clytie' waits patiently on her Deben mooring, the tide silently turning her as she waits for her crew to come aboard for new adventures as she has for the past 100 years. We count our custodianship of 'Clytie' not in years or decades, but generations and we will be delighted to welcome the sixth generation to sail on 'Clytie' in 2023 when Max Masters (born 9 December 2022) joins his Parents, Grandparents, Aunties, Great Uncle and second Cousins for East Coast and Gaffer adventures.

Jo and Paul Masters

Visit the blog:

www.eastcoastgaffers.org.uk

Nominate an East Coast featured boat by contacting the EASTCOASTER Editor: eastcoaster@oga.org.uk





'Clytie' and 'Kelpie II', 2018 Photo: Beverley Yates

'Kelpie II', Pin Mill, River Orwell

In the first of three articles published on the blog, Rik Graham recounts his 'Trip to the Medway (or how not to do it)', inspired by Yachting Monthly "The Confessional".

We have all, I think, had trips that went less than smoothly. It is often the unintended consequence of previous actions or omissions coupled with unexpected change in the weather. First a brief description of my boat 'Kelpie 2'. 'Kelpie' is a canoe yacht, more canoe than yacht by modern standards, 26 ft long, 6ft 6in beam drawing 3ft 9in. She is sloop rigged with roller reefing on both the main and the jib. She has plied the East Coast for all of her 120 years. The engine, at present, is a 2.5 horsepower outboard mounted on the beam within reach of the cockpit. The disadvantage of this arrangement is that the engine only works in almost flat water and motor sailing is only possible in exceptional circumstances. At sea the motor is usually stowed between the bunks in the cabin. I usually sail 'Kelpie' alone, for a number of reasons, not least because I get seasick if I am not on the helm which leads to a boring time for crew.

My destination for what was supposed to be a short cruise, taking in an open race at Greenwich Yacht Club, was, obviously, Greenwich. This was quite an adventure for me; I had only taken 'Kelpie' as far as Erith before. Greenwich and Erith are her home waters as she had been launched at Greenwich. To get there would take three days. The plan: day one Harwich to Brightlingsea, on the River Colne, day two Brightlingsea to Queenborough on the Medway and from there up The Thames to Greenwich.

I left Pin Mill, my home port on the Orwell, late on Wednesday 15 June, 2022 moving the boat down to Harwich to spend the night. I often do this to make the most of an early flood without an earlier than necessary start in the morning.

I caught the ebb out of Harwich leaving at about 6.30am, to catch the tide down The Wallet, past Walton-on-the-Naze, Frinton and Clacton, and had a good trip to the Blackwater, getting there in time for a sail to Bradwell before I turned round for the Colne and, entering Brightlingsea, took a berth on the heritage pontoon for the night.

The next morning dawned bright and clear with a moderate southerly blowing, forecast to increase to 4 to 5 later. Although the wind predicted was a little stronger than ideal it was nothing I could not cope with and with any luck the increase would hold off until I was well on my way. I had a bit of trouble getting the main up as the peak halliard and hardener had wound themselves up a bit but I was anxious to get under way and decided to sort it later in Queenborough. The halliards on 'Kelpie 2' have a tendency to wind round themselves which increases the resistance in the system making it hard work to peak the main sufficiently. This is caused by the turns taken when coiling the tails working their way through the blocks and twisting the braided rope. The last two lacing turns on the main luff were also undone but the main sets perfectly well like that, I generally only fully lace the main to the mast if I am racing because it is faster to reef if I do not have to unlace the sail first. It does, however, mean that the spare lacing line dangles around unless I tie it up.

I left two hours before low water to ride the ebb out of The Colne and crossed the Swin spitway on the early flood. With a southerly blowing it was a case of long and short tacks to pass the Maplins but with the tide behind me I was happy with the progress I was making and made good time to off Shoeburyness. As I entered The Thames Estuary proper and made my course for the Medway I thought it prudent to reduce sail; the wind was picking up and I was still close hauled. Because of the reefing arrangements shortening sail is easy. Roll up the jib and the boat sits head to wind, drop the main the required amount then up on deck to roll up the slack and nip back to the cockpit and resume sailing. One and a half rolls down and we were on our way. I must say that I miss the power station chimney that used to sit on the Isle of Grain; it was always comforting as an unmistakable navigation mark.

I have never had a problem crossing the estuary, in terms of getting across the shipping lanes, not that I have done it that often. This time was different. The wind was still picking up so I decided to reduce sail more. I went through the normal procedure and now had three rolls in the mainsail but when I let out the jib I kept a reef in that as well. Now more comfortable I carried on south. As I approached the dredged channel it was evident that there were three ships moving, the first two travelling east and one, large container ship going west. They were so spaced that by the time I had let the two eastbound ships past the container ship would stop my further progress south. Then the radio came to life with a strong wind warning, southerly 7 imminent.

My best option was to make the Kent shore as quickly as possible to get as much lee as I could and there would be less fetch for the sea. The two eastbound ships had passed but if I carried on I would, as I had thought, pass too close ahead of the container ship for either his comfort or mine. I turned west on a parallel course to wait for her to pass. Now I was going flat out on a broad reach, about 6.5 knots and she was going slowly as she was in a relatively narrow channel.

It seemed to take an age for her to pass so I could cross astern, but at least I was travelling in the right general direction. I have since looked at my track on the sat nav and I shadowed her for almost two miles so about 20 minutes. As soon as I was clear of her and closer to Kent I decided to take in more sail. Normal procedure, except this time there was a problem. When I rolled in the previous reefs I had caught the bottom of the lacing line, which had shaken free from its stowage, in the sail and I could not roll in any more without releasing it. That would mean unrolling the sail completely and resetting it from scratch. I knew, however, that the sail would not roll up correctly unless I hoisted the majority of it before re-rolling it.

The conditions were such that unfurling the whole sail would be challenging, to say the least, and the problem with the peak halliards now became a serious handicap, stopping me from easily re-raising the gaff. The only sensible course of action would be to carry on and hope things improved as I got further south.



'Kelpie II' homeward bound, 2020 Photo: Sue Lewis

I eased the sheets to lessen the wind pressure and discovered that I could still shape a good course as she was. I looked down to the echo sounder and had a momentary shock of panic. It was reading 0.0 metres. The echo sounder was three weeks old as I had had problems with the previous one and had replaced it. I quickly realised that the reading could not be true as I was still, according to my sat nav, on the edge of the dredged channel and not far from the track of the container ship. What to do? Well it was a piece of electronics, so I switched it off and on again. It decided we were in 14 metres, but now I didn't trust it. They say things come in threes, the final thing was one of the shrouds. I have come to the conclusion that I had missed tightening the lock nuts on one of the rigging screws the last time I had adjusted the rigging, and the port aft shroud, one of two, was now flapping in the considerable breeze. I came to the conclusion that as long as I was close hauled, even spilling wind as I was, the running backstay could stay made up, so that should take some of the strain, anyway there was no chance of making up the shroud under those conditions safely, if at all.

I was by this time safely to the south side of the estuary but I did not want to push too far inshore with an untrustworthy echo sounder. So I was sailing a line somewhere between the shallows and the worst of the seas. Now further off the wind with the main eased to suit the boat was behaving herself although the occasional gust was difficult to cope with. I made good progress past Garrison Point but once in the Medway it was wind over tide with a four mile fetch so the sea was, well, boisterous would be a good word. I was once again as hard on the wind as I could get.

Rik Graham



'Kelpie II' sailing on the Orwell, 2015 Photo: Beverley Yates



Photos from Clay family archives

Peter Clay

Hugh Browton, Bosun to Pete Clay and 'Nirvana' writes on behalf of the family in memory of Peter Clay, who passed away in January, 2023. The funeral will be held on Thursday 9 February, 2023 at Seven Hills Crematorium, near Ipswich.

OGA Member Peter Clay has raised jib and (gaff) mizzen, slipped the mooring, and departed on the ebbing tide of the River Deben. In this manner, Pete passed on very peacefully on 16 January, 2023 with friends and family close by.

Pete, long time owner of 'Nirvana of Arklow' (44' over spars, gaff-rigged yawl, Albert Strange-designed, built in Arklow, Ireland in 1925), was well-known on England's east coast, and further afield, particularly in Scandinavian waters, especially those of Denmark where he often sailed and over-wintered 'Nirvana'. All those who sailed with him have many stories of adventures and great company.



A very talented woodworker, he first trained as a violin maker and restorer. He always seemed to translate that skill into the joinery work he created on boats; the same precision but on a much larger scale. The beautiful interior of 'Nirvana' (which astonishingly he built while living in Switzerland and brought back to the UK in flat-pack form) visibly reveals those origins.

Living for many years in Woodbridge on the River Deben he has always been centrally involved in matters concerning the town and its river. The successful redevelopment of the town's waterfront is a result of his action group's tireless efforts in doing battle with the Council and with rapacious developers.

In recent years an interest rekindled by time spent at *Vikingskibs Museet* in Roskilde, Denmark, has led to a leading role in the fascinating Sutton Hoo Saxon burial ship reconstruction, which is taking shape in the rebuilt Whisstocks Longshed in Woodbridge.

Pete is survived by his wife, daughter and extended family, by his friends and by the crew of 'Nirvana' who will miss him greatly. He was such a great skipper.

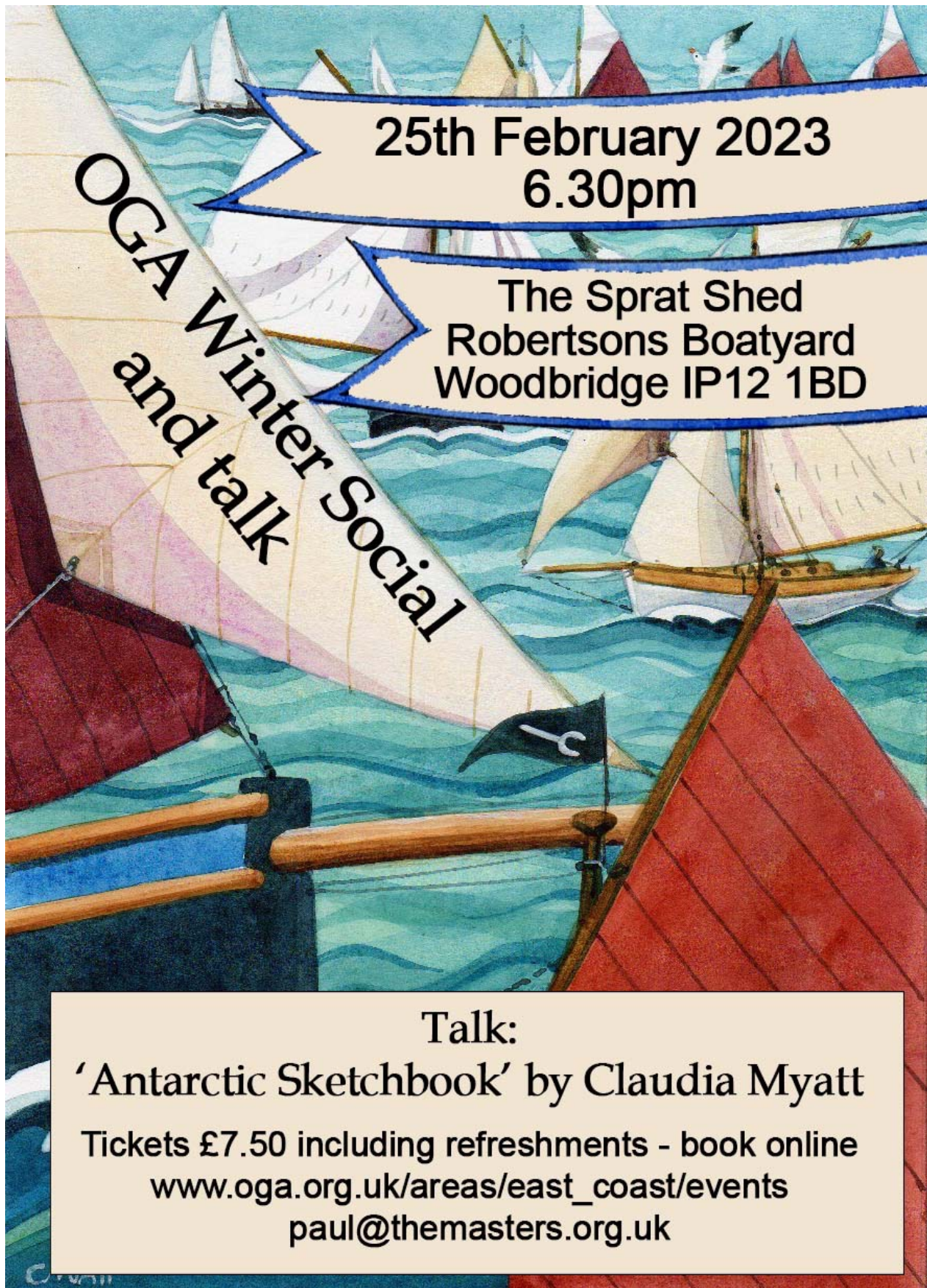
The funeral will be held on Thursday 9 February, 2023 at Seven Hills Crematorium, near Ipswich.

Hugh Browton

Bosun to Pete Clay and 'Nirvana'



Photo: Sandy Miller



**OGA Winter Social
and talk**

**25th February 2023
6.30pm**

**The Sprat Shed
Robertsons Boatyard
Woodbridge IP12 1BD**

Talk:
'Antarctic Sketchbook' by Claudia Myatt
Tickets £7.50 including refreshments - book online
www.oga.org.uk/areas/east_coast/events
paul@themasters.org.uk