

EASTCOASTER

Newsletter of the East Coast OGA



Our three featured boats in this issue are all very different, continuing to reflect the range of craft we have here on the East Coast. The excellent report on the Annual Race by James Boyd, in 'Concord of Mersea' is summarised as 'a wonderful time amidst the loveliest of East Coast boats.'

A highlight this Summer was the Dutch 20th Anniversary Cruise. Our cover photo of Hoorn is by OGA NL member, Celeste Balmelli. Several UK Gaffers braved the North Sea to join the event, returning in time to catch up with the very successful Summer Cruise. The Cruise reports include two from very young Gaffers Max (written by his Dad) and Lilly. In October, there was another foray from the East Coast to the Netherlands for the Reeuwijk Raid.

Sadly, we say farewell to three EC Members this Autumn: Peter Maynard, Bernard Patrick and Captain Richard Woodman. Finally, Tony Judd remembers taking delivery of 'Diamond' CK250, now having a new custodian and kept at Pin Mill.

Please continue to send contributions for Eastcoaster and let your Editor know what you'd like to see included (or left out!).

Good quality photos are always most welcome.

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Planning ahead: dates for the diary

This Newsletter will be mailed after the closing date for meals at our Area AGM on 2 November so there's just Claudia's sketching workshop open for booking in 2024. Your Committee has been working hard on the 2025 Programme though and there's already some dates for the diary with a draft programme available in November, published for the AGM.

Keep updated by visiting the Events page on the website:
www.oga.org.uk/areas/east_coast/east_coast_events.html

2 November, 2024: East Coast Area AGM

Royal Harwich Yacht Club

8 December, 2024: 'Sketchbook Sailor'

Join Claudia Myatt at the Sprat Shed, Woodbridge.

11 January, 2025: Association AGM, Gloucester

Full details and booking information in Winter Gaffers Log.

8 February, 2025: Grand Day Out, London

Save the date and watch out for more details later this year. The outline plan is to visit Trinity Buoy Wharf & Cutty Sark with guided tours available.

www.oga.org.uk/areas/east_coast/events/granddayout.html

15 March, 2025: Annual Dinner

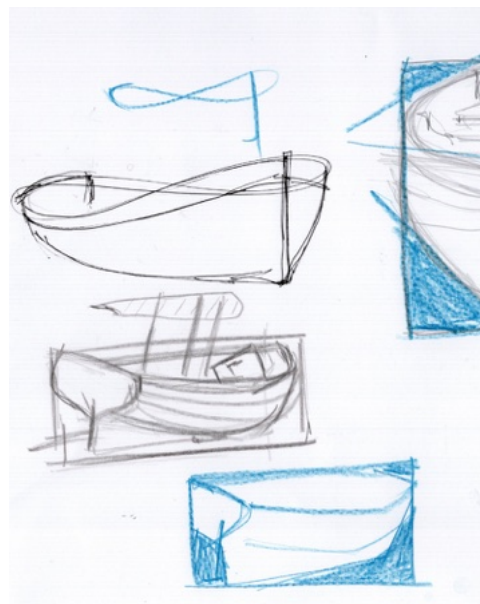
Save the date for a less formal event held in 2025 at West Mersea Yacht Club.

Racing & handicaps: 2025

If you race, please help the EC Area Handicap & Racing sub-committee. They have been working hard to update information for EC boats and make this available. There are many boats for which information is incomplete or very out of date. Please visit the updated page to check your boat's class and handicap.

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

Boats that are missing or with a status of 'UPDATE' need to send new measurements using the instructions on the Racing page . . . maybe a job for the winter while you're laying up?!



'Sketchbook Sailor' with Claudia Myatt, 8 December 2024



Bow Creek Lighthouse, Trinity Buoy Wharf [Grim23 CC license]



Stoned at Bench Head: 27 July, 2024

The 60th OGA Annual Race was held at Stone Sailing Club on 27 July, 2024. This race report has been written by James Boyd, 'Concord of Mersea' illustrated with photos from Seamus Masters and Sandy Miller.

The day dawned clear and with little wind as I clambered out of Concord's cabin, cast off her mooring at Clamp House and motored up the misty Ipswich river. I locked into the dock and was pottering down below when the thump of a seabag on the deck heralded the arrival of Timbo Plummer. 'Right mate! I've brought tea and sugar and milk and ... a proper sized mug' he declared, drawing out of his bag an object that resembled a bucket with a handle. 'Is the kettle on?' The kettle was and, having kept his tea based life form happy, we proceeded to refuel and water the ship as quickly as we could and let go to catch the last of the ebb to Harwich. The Old Gaffers Annual Race at Stone was on the morrow and we were keen to catch the young flood through the Wallet.

Late on the tide we headed out to sea with a fair forecast and all the signs of an uneventful passage but as we fetched Stone Banks buoy the wind increased and drew forward. The sea began to show sharp little teeth. 'Concord' kicked up her heels and pitched into the rising chop. We found ourselves donning oilies and bearing away for the Gunfleet as we looked warily to windward. It turned out to be nothing but the faintest reminder of what the mate called a 'wallet bastard' and soon the sea smoothed and we wished for a capful of wind as we wallowed towards the Blackwater. Oilies were returned to their locker and other garments joined them as the temperature soared. 'Concord' seemed to realise she was returning to home waters. There was a faint disturbance felt through the helm. Her early life was spent in West Mersea where she had been the muse of artist Archie White. He immortalised those pre-war years with exquisitely painted track charts and tomes of their adventures; a record of skylarks and ebullient spirits before the world darkened and the tides of war passed beneath her keel. On the horizon the mirages and inversions of the Thames Estuary turned the day into a surreal dream and as the sea became glass it was as if we were floating back into those watercolour pages of the 1930's.

As we approached the entrance to the Blackwater other gaff sails began to slide over the horizon on a track to the Stone Yacht Club. Beautiful 'Gladys' wended upriver ahead of us. 'Fable' nuzzled a buoy outside the club and we admired, as always, her perfection of lines. Supper was steaming away on the Taylor's stove and the kettle was whistling the promise of yet more tea as we finally picked up a mooring for the night. The club had laid on water taxis and it was a pleasure to avail ourselves of their good



East Coast Race, 2024 Photo: Seamus Masters

humoured services without engaging in the onerous job of pumping up the rubber duck. Ashore we soon found ourselves in a cosy fug of bonhomie and banter fuelled by real ale and the reunion of old friends. Tankards in hand we gazed out over the little ships at rest as the sun settled into the marshes and the sky caught fire. At nightfall 'Maria' stole into the river, silhouetted and dangerous; a flypast of engineless sailing from the virtuoso duo of Paul Winter and Tom Curtis. One could hear the smack of a gauntlet being laid as she sidled into her anchorage under scandalised main.

We awoke the next day in time to see a pert smack with a crew of young bloods drop her anchor almost on the start line. 'Dirty Girty' was ferrying crew from boat to boat. Exclamations of mirth and occasional good natured imprecations floated across the water. The clank of a windlass began marking time. And suddenly like a hatch of mayfly the river was full of boats. We let go the mooring and headed into the fray. 'Concord' was not designed for light weather; she likes the wind and was built to make long passages to far away places. Her sails for such circumstances had never been out of the bag and we were unclear if they would fit. The night before we had hauled the ghoster up on deck and found its corners but it remained to be seen what would happen when it was hauled to the mast head. Imagine our glee when, after saying a close hello to 'Fanny of Cowes' bowsprit, we found ourselves within a cats whisker of the first boat over the line and with everything setting in fine full curves. The ghoster ghosted and the mizzen staysail pulled her along beautifully. Tea simmered on the stove and all was right with the world.

And then the pert little smack of that morning popped out a cloud burst of colour from the end of her sprit and sailed merrily past us. Indeed we suddenly found ourselves in the thick of a veritable array of bow chasers of varying hues. Water sails appeared beneath booms. 'Martha' was showing a turn of speed that would prove to be fatal to the rest of the fleet. And slowly at first but with gathering pace we were passed. We weren't worried or surprised. There is, after all, a whiff of black magic about the Essex Smacks; they have the miraculous speed of an open 60 and the crews I am sure dance by the light of the moon, chew broken bottles, and make spells before each race. It was when the pocket gaffers began to show us their sterns that we realised our true predicament. The wind was teasing the fleet. Catspaws appeared and disappeared and a patch of dark water offered hope only to collapse into an oily wind-hole of slatting sails. Far astern the last boat suddenly heeled to a fine breeze and we waited for the same wind to reach 'Concord' whereupon we would most surely catch up with the fleet ahead. But it was not to be. 'Rely' (for it was she) roared past us in a cumulus of sails and when the breeze touched us she was already romping downwind and becoming smaller by the minute.

The mate and I slumped a little as we found ourselves at last at the back of the fleet. 'Maybe it's just not 'er day' said Timbo 'Tell yer what though, I ain't used to being back o' the fleet in the Blackwater, it's a new experience'. The tide grew a little older and so did we as we watched the fleet draw away to the horizon, rounding the hay seed of the Bench Head Buoy. As they hardened up and sailed back past us we found ourselves alone save for a fishing boat at anchor. 'Concord' was uneasy in



East Coast Race, 2024
Photos on this page: Sandy Miller



'Concord of Mersea'



the confluence of waters. The tidal gate shut inexorably and we observed with interest that we were now sailing backwards as the flood started to run. There we lay, a painted ship on a painted ocean and I remembered suddenly that Archie White had painted many pictures of 'Concord' with the Bench Head abeam, outward bound or coming home. It was a mark of significance for them both. The tide swirled and my neck prickled. I remembered a time on passage round the outside of the Isle of Wight when I had appeared to see the face of her old skipper smiling owlishly at me through the companionway in the night watches. I became convinced that his shade was out there at the buoy calling for his old love to stay forever. I was brought back to earth by an outraged cry from the mate who had discovered his tea mug was in need of replenishing. The wind filled a little and we began to make slow progress. The rest of the fleet had re-entered the river by the time we were able to harden up and with a freshening breeze, 'Concord' buried her shoulder and began to show some interest.

It occurred to me at this point to hang over the weather rail and have a good look at her bottom. To my chagrin there wasn't much paint showing beneath a carpet of mud scale. I hung on by my toes and swiped a half circle under her water line with my arm. It emerged looking like an artefact from the seabed. As I raised the offending object above my head the mate let out a howl of derision. 'You 'avent scrubbed! And you're going to get the Old 'Arry prize! And it serves you right for sailing to France last week instead of workin' on 'er!'. Slightly nettled by this lack of loyalty I stuck two muddy fingers up at him and we spent the next few tacks exchanging pleasantries that eventually became laughter. There was after all some relief in the banishing of uncertainty and it is a fact too that 'Concord' likes more of a breeze and even with the silkiest of undersides may have found herself, though perhaps not quite so dramatically, last. As we fetched back into the river with what was now a fine wind we swallowed our pride with rueful grins and hot tea. Showing her best side and hiding all evidence of the skipper's laxness 'Concord' surged over the finish line.

It had been a wonderful time amidst the loveliest of East Coast boats. The sun went down, glasses were raised on the Stone Yacht Club terrace and the evening lull settled on the water as night drew its veil over the memories of the day. 'Old Harry' now sits on the shelves in the kitchen at home, his two fingers raised and his gaff jaws at the ready. I feel a strong connection with all East Coast sailors as he eyes me over the morning brew.

Words & 'Old Harry' photo, copyright:

James Boyd 9 August, 2024

Photos: Sandy Miller & Seamus Masters

Visit www.eastcoastgaffers.org.uk/annual-race-1/ for full race results, award of trophies and more photos.

The OGA Annual Race showcases the wide range of boats represented by our membership. In Eastcoaster, we also try to represent this with our monthly 'featured boat'.

Your Editor tries to find as many different boats as possible to 'feature' and would love to hear from you with your own suggestions!

Meanwhile, here are the most recent boats from August, September and October . . .



East Coast Race, 2024

Photos on this page: Seamus Masters





Featured boats

The past three months has seen 'Catsnip', 'Minnie' and 'Rely' featured on Eastcoaster and our Social Media channels.

'Minnie'

Our featured boat for September is not even 20 years old, 'Minnie' is one of the sizeable OGA fleet of 'new' gaffer designs. With obvious influence from the Cornish Shrimper, Dudley Dix drew the Cape Cutter in the late 1990s for Cape Yachts in South Africa. The design is for both plywood and GRP build. Cape Yachts built 55 in GRP, many of which were exported to the UK. Production then transferred to Honnor Marine in the UK and they have so far built a further 80. As well as the GRP production boats there have been a number of DIY plywood builds.

'Minnie', sail number 85, was built in 2006. Her early history is unknown but is thought to have been based in Norfolk. In 2013 she was bought by Ian McIver who immediately embarked on an anticlockwise circumnavigation of the UK, completed in 2017. He made use of the easy trailability to carry out the circumnavigation in a series of stages, using the trailer to return home between legs, recorded on the Cape Cutter 19 Association website. Ian's efforts are just one testament to the seaworthiness of the design; there have been and continue to be other circumnavigations and many adventurous passages.

In 2019 'Minnie' moved to Chichester Harbour and was renamed 'Thistle'. The new owner was a very experienced yachtsman down-sizing from a much larger cruising boat. He put her up for sale in 2021. Down-sizing from an Atalanta 26 I was seeking simplicity, a gaff rig, increase in the proportion of sailing to maintenance time alongside an attractive boat with good performance and capable of drying out broadly level. Whilst evaluating my short-list of designs I was surprised to find I'd bought 'Minnie', on a bit of a whim, returning her to the East Coast and original name.

For a variety of reasons, 'Minnie' spent just a few days under sail in the first two years of my ownership. During these fallow years, I replaced all of the rigging. Against the Cape Cutter 19 trend, replacements were monochromatic: I can't shake off strong leanings towards traditional aesthetics. A large number of black nylon cleats were also replaced with more pleasing wooden versions. I also struggled with the 'functional' style of the interior – vast areas of rippled magnolia flow-coat, stainless nuts and backing plates. With care to keep additional weight to a minimum I 'warmified' the space with bulkhead and 'inwhale' (if only she had one) trims.

2024 has been a much better year, with much more sailing! 'Minnie' took part in her first East Coast OGA Summer Cruise last month. The Cape Cutter's sailing ability is well documented, albeit in the hands of others. The big rig gives drive in light airs and suitably reefed is capable in much stronger winds.

But, is she really a cutter? This appearance was part of the attraction. However, the designer makes clear that he intended the foresails as ‘either/or’: the large genoa would be flown from the bowsprit end in lighter winds and replaced by the staysail as winds increase. However, many owners sail with both set and have re-cut the genoa to a yankee to help them work together. ‘Minnie’ has this modification. In my limited experience so far I am tending towards the designer’s view of setting only one at a time.

I am still coming to terms with my downsize. Stowage is at a premium and I probably don’t need to carry quite so many tools and spares. My interior modifications have helped but lounging whilst moored is still not quite what I would like. How I miss the twin-lifting keels of the Atalanta which put keel boxes into the bunk structure and leave the centreline clear for feet! Maybe I should have had the Winkle Brig on my short-list.

The Cape Cutter 19 is known for her performance and seaworthiness. The designer says “I designed the CC19 to handle the boisterous seas and winds found around the Cape of Good Hope, so it has proven quite at home in the sometimes rough conditions around the Solent”. The boats have proven to be very capable cruisers, evidenced by the many blogs and accounts on the Owners Association website. They have a surprising turn of speed and have won the modern gaffer division of the Round the Island Race (around the Isle of Wight) a number of times.

Words & photos: Nick Phillips

‘Catsnip’

Our featured boat for August was ‘Catsnip’, a 17ft production catboat built by Com-Pac Yachts in the USA, shipped out new in 2006 to her first owner here in the UK. She is believed to be the only ‘Sun Cat’ to make it across the Pond, albeit in a shipping container. Daniel Stoker purchased ‘Catsnip’ with his father in 2021 after seeing an advert on eBay during lockdown. He discovered she was already listed on the OGA Boat Register. This prompted him to join the East Coast OGA and ‘Catsnip’ has become a regular participant at OGA events along the East Coast since 2023.

A season on the Cleddau in 2022, learning how to sail a gaff rig for the first time and beginning to discover the abilities and character of ‘Catsnip’ included a circumnavigation of Skomer and a night at anchor near Dale. The following season, ‘Catsnip’ made the journey east to her current home on the River Colne.

Finding that, with her mast down, ‘Catsnip’ would probably fit under the Heigham Potter Bridge, Daniel decided to enter the Three Rivers Race (3RR) on the Norfolk Broads with ‘Catsnip’ in 2023. He had first done the 3RR in 2019, crewing on a friend’s boat when they failed to finish within the time limit. This challenging race must be completed within 24 hours and includes sailing 50 miles to round four marks on three rivers and pass, mast down with paddles, under three bridges.

Find more about ‘Catsnip’ on the Eastcoaster website where she’s a regular participant in sailing events.

Words & photos: Daniel Stoker





'Rely'

'Rely' was built in 1911 by Nobles of Fraserburgh commissioned as a 'Zulu' pilot vessel without an engine and two lug sails. Her life as a pilot boat was short lived and she was purchased by three ladies in Aberdeen who fished her out of the Orkneys. The boat fished off the beach in the Orkneys and was fitted with an auxillary engine in 1915. Her 'Zulu' stern was adapted to allow for a shaft and rudder.

The original auxiliary was a TVO engine, which is now in the Science Museum, London. 'Rely' fished successfully from Shetland and Kirkwall all year round through the first world war and up to the start of the second world war. There are many sketches of her and she is fondly remembered.

'Rely' disappears from the fishing registry at the start of the second world war. We believe that she was taken into service and there are stories of her being at both Dunkirk and D-Day. There is confirmation that the fisherman from Shetland came to the South Coast to pick her up in 1946. She rejoined the fishing register until 1955, fishing out of Shetland.

In 1955 she changed to Part 1 Lloyds registration having been purchased by Commander Ru Ru O'Brian, a highly decorated British Officer. He cruised her widely with his family around the UK coast and Southern Europe from Heybridge Basin until 1965. He made many improvements to the boat to make it more comfortable. She had a wheelhouse on her.

The late Brian Hammet and his wife Lorna both remembered her at Heybridge Basin. From the mid 1960s to 1997 her ownership is less clear. She was owned by a senior executive at Shell and cruised in the Netherlands; owned by an Artist where she was painted red and laid up on huge oak legs in Falmouth.

She went through a rebuild and refit at the Falmouth boatbuilding college ready for a trip to the Caribbean and owned by a boatyard in Plymouth where she was sailed regularly in Northern France and the English West Country.

Purchased by her current owners in 1998 as a family boat, she has been slowly restored over the years. 'Rely' is a well-known member of the East Coast OGA fleet and is cruised with family and friends on the East Coast, South Coast and the occasional trip to Northern France, Belgium and Holland.

Words: Sophie Blackburn

Photo: 'Rely' in Harwich Harbour at the EC Summer Cruise, 2015, Beverley Yates



Summer Cruise, 2024

The East Coast Summer Cruise was later this year to allow those travelling to the Netherlands for NL20 time to return. The week began with registration at Shotley Marina on Sunday 25 August, in somewhat stormy weather with 'Clytie', 'Transcur' and 'East Breeze' still awaiting a calmer weather window to cross the North Sea. All three finally reached the East Coast in time to join the last few days of the Cruise.

'Kestrel', 'Sniff' and 'Cachalot' met the fleet on Monday at Ramsholt after the passage race from Shotley to Woodbridge Haven Buoy. The fleet spent a couple of enjoyable days in sunny weather on the Deben, including a visit to the Ramsholt Arms and beach barbecue at the Rocks.

Having sailed from their home port in Ipswich to join the Cruise, 'William' noted: "It was our first time anchoring at the Rocks. Gorgeous sunset, gorgeous people. The next morning we got up early for the tide and were greeted by the magical sight of gaffers in the mist."

With the Deben bar to negotiate and shallow water at Walton, skippers took a wide range of decisions with passage planning to ensure they reached Walton & Frinton Yacht Club in time for the Gin Tasting. Starting at Woodbridge Haven Buoy (HW 0700/1934) the Seaways Bells Passage Race finish line was Walton no. 2.

Drawing 2m. 'Rely' was the first to start, just before dawn, followed by 'William' and 'Cachalot' both comfortably crossing the Deben bar just after high water. The early morning brought very light winds, forcing some motor-sailing. Those with shallower drafts left later in the day and caught the sea breeze on a beautiful sunny afternoon.

Just in time for the gin, 'Daisy Bell' was hauled up to WFYC to rest against the posts. The enjoyable and informative talk and tasting took place at 1730 on Wednesday 28 August, presented by East Coast Distillery at W&FYC followed by a meal and socialising at the Club.

Thursday found 20 or so Gaffers climbing the Naze Tower for the wonderful views after an informative talk about its history. Originally built as an aid to shipping along this fairly featureless coastline, many Gaffers had only ever seen it from the sea. Others took advantage of the perfect conditions to go out for a sail before everyone met up on the beach at Stone Point for the judging of the Gaffers Bake-Off, a barbecue on the beach and a barrel of beer from our sponsors, The Mighty Oak Brewing Co.

Friday was a bit more breezy making the Pennyhole Bay Race quite an exciting beat out from Walton no. 2 to Pye End and Cork Ledge, returning into Harwich Harbour with a finish line at Beacon Hill. Boats proceeded up the River Orwell to Pin Mill for supper and evening socialising at the Sailing Club.

'East Breeze', the last boat returning from the Netherlands, arrived just in time for a burger having sailed single-handed from Neiwpoort to Ramsgate and on up the coast to Pin Mill. The forecast storms arrived with a vengeance on Saturday and only 'Transcur' ventured downriver for the Gafferteering competition.

The Royal Harwich Yacht Club provided us with an excellent evening meal to finish off the week in style followed by the prizegiving and chance to share stories from the week.

Thanks go to the organisers for setting up an excellent week of racing, cruising, socialising, tours, food, beer and gin: Josie, Josh, Ed, George and Vicky. Everyone is looking forward to the next Cruise in 2025!

Participating boats:

'Catsnip', 'Daisy Bell', 'William', 'Tabnab', 'Minnie', 'Half Moon', 'Cayoote', 'Reverie', 'Charm', 'Songbird', 'Diamond', 'Rely', 'Gilda', 'Tab Nab', 'Clytie', 'Transcur', 'East Breeze', 'Kestrel', 'Cachalot', 'Sniff' and 'Philomena'

Youngest Gaffer joins the Cruise

Josh Masters shares his thoughts of taking baby Max, aged 18 months, on the 2024 East Coast Cruise.

Sailing as new parents certainly has its challenges, you'd think there would be an elevated sense of awareness and guard given the risk of head hitting, getting knotted in ropes and falling overboard, but in reality it seemed almost easier than life on land. Bear in mind this is Dad's view of things . . . if you ask Mum, Alex it might differ slightly!

I think it was the compact nature of life onboard the family boat 'Clytie' and the simplicity of stuff that made things with an energetic 18-month old fairly straightforward. With the distractions of normal life left on land, we connected more with the present, something I think everyone could do with more of.

Sure there was sand everywhere and by the end of the week most things had a hint of mud. But to me that's just sailing on the East Coast done right!

Part of me wants to also feel that the success of sailing with a little one is attributed to the deep family connection with the boat. Max is the sixth generation sailing on 'Clytie'. But I think this is just a nice thought. In reality it's probably just the sailing and salt air that I've known from when I was Max's age that puts me at ease as a parent. This, in turn reflects in Max. Who knows really?

Having a small person did mean there was slightly less late night beach fires, rum tots and talks under the stars, but that didn't matter. I was now the parent not the child. Like an old memory surfacing it opened a new perspective, fond, familiar and full of rewards. A new generation for 'Clytie'.

A new memory for Max. And a new Young Gaffer.

Words & photos by Dad: Josh Masters



*'Cachalot' at the Rocks
Photo: Jodie Warren*



*Max enjoys life aboard 'Clytie' and
on the beach with Mum & Dad*





'Catsnip' and her crew report on the Summer Cruise

Despite commitments preventing us from doing the full week, 'Catsnip' and her crew had an enjoyable time on this year's East Coast Summer Cruise. Highlights for us included a rather wild downwind passage from the Backwaters up to Shotley, surfing our way north into Harwich under reefed and scandalised mainsail to meet up with everyone on the first evening. The following day we said a temporary 'fair winds' to the fleet as they headed up to the River Deben.

Instead we returned to Titchmarsh in thankfully calmer conditions taking advantage of our shoal draft to beat all the way into the Backwaters and Twizzle at low tide. This passage was aided by 'local knowledge' gained from the excellent Swallows & Amazons weekend earlier in the season.

Suffering from Deben FOMO during the week, we rejoined the fleet on Friday for the Pennyhole Bay Race and passage up the River Orwell to Pin Mill. A long course was set which saw us all beating out of the Backwaters to Pye End Buoy and then heading offshore to Cork Ledge in a rather bumpy sea before gybing for a long run back towards shore.

Making a good start, and somehow managing to ride up and over each wave rather than into them, we stuck with the bulk of the fleet until the long run, where the bigger boats powered away. At the windward mark we managed to gybe inside 'Cachalot' and ended up sailing in close company for rest of the race – snapping photos of each other as we went!

After the finish, we enjoyed a pleasant sail up the Orwell, feeling rather insignificant as we passed the container ships at Felixstowe. Berthing in Woolverston Marina, it was a short walk back down to Pin Mill to catch up with everyone at the Sailing Club. A suitable three-course dinner was enjoyed, having sailed 25 nm, consisting of cake, burger, cake!

The following day we said 'fair winds and apologies' again as we left to fulfil a long-held aim – sailing to Ipswich to go to the footy! After an entertaining afternoon at Portman Road, we left Ipswich Lock on free-flow and enjoyed a fantastic sail all the way back to Titchmarsh. This brought to an end our start-stop week on the Cruise, but we're already looking forward to next year and will try to actually be available for the full week!

Words & photo by Daniel and Amy, 'Catsnip'

P.S. We later learned that we'd won the Pennyhole Bay Race, making it a 3rd OGA trophy for 'Catsnip' this year! Excitement aside, our apologies again for missing the final dinner and prizegiving! And Ed – you're welcome with that tape measure whenever it's convenient!

Lilly joins Popsie & Granny for the Cruise

We hear from Lilly, aged nine, sailing with her Granny and Popsie on 'Charm'. Her full report is on the Eastcoaster website.

I started my journey at Titchmarsh Marina on Wednesday. We were given a lift by Josh to Walton and Frinton Yacht Club where we had dinner and talked to everyone. I had ordered chilli and I said to my Granny. 'Hopefully it won't be too spicy' It looked great, but it was very hot. The pudding was delicious. Next day, I was very excited about my day out, we were going to visit the Naze Tower with all the Gaffers. When we arrived, a lady who was in charge, gave a long interesting speech about the Naze Tower. She also said there were shark teeth on the beach. After the speech, Granny, Popsie and I went up the Naze Tower looking at the beautiful art pieces. Finally, when we got to the top, we saw the amazing view and Charm in the distance. After we had finished looking at the fantastic view we walked back down and Popsie took me to look for shark teeth. Sadly, we didn't find any.

As soon as we got back to Charm in the afternoon, we got ready to sail to Stone Point. On the way, we made something for an Old Gaffers Bake Off. The rules were simple, we were given 2 tins without labels and whatever we found in the tins, we had to create something with it. We found kidney beans in one and mushy peas in the other. Sous Chef Granny and I had the best idea ever! We would make a picture of Stone Point because that was where the competition was being held. When we arrived at Stone Point, we jumped in the dinghy with our masterpiece and sailed ashore. The judges talked about all of the entries and tasted them. The judges were Pete and Claire and had chefs's hats on. I got a chocolate bar for best creativity.

Next we had lots of fun on the beach, ate a BBQ, then hopped in the dinghy and rowed to Tempus as Mike had asked us to go for a drink. Then the day was over and I thought this was my favourite day of the week. The next morning I sailed the dinghy with Popsie and I practised tacking. We then sailed Charm to Pin Mill and picked up a mooring. Suddenly, it got very windy and the dinghy kept banging into Charm and Popsie said he wasn't sure if rowing ashore for the BBQ was a good idea. Popsie was most worried about rowing back in the dark with the wind blowing a lot. We eventually decided that we would have to drive to Pin Mill so parked Charm in Levington marina. I played with Max at Pin Mill and everyone chatted a lot. I couldn't go dinghy sailing the next day as the wind was still too strong.

We drove to Royal Harwich and when we arrived everyone was chatting so we said 'Hi' and I played with Max again and then it was time for dinner. Dinner was great and so was the pudding. It finally came to the awards and some people were given trophies and some were given bells. It came to the end and then they suddenly announced my name and I was so happy. I got given a trophy saying Little Gaffer and a packet of Twirls, it was for taking part in everything. When I went up to get my prize I had a photo with Pete the Knife and I was thinking what a great week on the boat I have had. It was now the end of the night and the end of this amazing adventure. I can't wait to be on the boat again. The End

Words: Lilly Photos: Granny & Popsie

it masterpiece & sailing ashore
When we got to the beach, I put
of Stone point on the table and
judging to commence. When the
judges looked at all the competitors
I asked about who were the 3 winners.
Who were the judges announced who
we didn't come 1 2 3 but I got
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s backing the side of Charm so we eventually



NL20: The log of 'East Breeze'

Skipper, Marion, recounts her adventures in 'East Breeze' on the Dutch OGA Anniversary Cruise, 3 – 17 August, 2024.

Ten years ago, I conceived the idea of taking my Tamarisk 22 foot gaffer, 'East Breeze', to the celebrations for OGA10 in the Netherlands. If I could sail west from Southampton as far as Yarmouth, I could sail east to Shoreham. Then I could get to Eastbourne and, when I could see the other side, I would cross the Channel. So, early one morning, I crept away from a gaffers' rally at Bembridge and that is what I did. 'East Breeze' had her original, 40+ year old engine, fragile sails, a quantity of rot and very little in the way of electronic navigational aids. We had a wonderful time in the Dutch mast-up route and then came all the way back through owing to hurricane Bertha.

Ten years on, 'East Breeze' has several more channel crossings under her belt, a new engine and sails, is much repaired and equipped with more electronics and I had crew. We crossed from an anchorage near Felixstowe to Belgium, some 80 miles over the ground, braving the many ships, creeping in and picking up a berth in Ostend shortly before midnight. We were in touch with other British gaffers who had crossed further south and they caught us up in beautiful Middelburg after our short hop to Blankenberge and a longer one across the Westerschelde via Vlissingen. When you enter the sea lock and the water goes down, you realise that you have reached the Low countries. Our pre-rally trip took us cycling at Kortgene, anchoring in the glorious Veersemeer and thence to Wemeldinge on a great day of arrival of Solent and East Coast gaffers and with a huge Belgian/South Dutch gaffers party prepared by themselves.

Ten years ago we left Wemeldinge on a pitch black morning but this time it was only raining and the weather improved as a posse of Dutch and English boats became the rally feeder. We experimented with our locks and bridges pattern: don't all rush at once but don't get left behind and crammed in to the old port harbour at historic Willemstad with 'Hilda', our "shepherd" boat. Oh what a tying up and shorelining and fendering went on. The sailing is inland in anything from a short canal to what is practically a sea. Some are salt; others fresh. In some, you may not tack and have to be ware of the furious and fast arrival of cargo carrying barges.

The next day after sailing in very light airs (we took the view that we would sail past the other Tamarisk and then motor, during which time we passed some of the bigger boats clearly doing the same sort of thing) we entered the fine harbour of Hellevoetsluis to start the main rally. It's a fine town, bigger than some but still one of the star-shaped forts constructed to deter Napoleon. Here we were registered and fed pizza, given a tour of the town by Admiral de Ruiter himself and introduced to the first stage of battle, a variation on skittles, involving belaying pins and an admiral figure who wasn't to be knocked down. I managed to do that with my first shot.

About fifty ships took part in the rally, some travelling the whole whole way and others leaving or even leaving and joining again. Some were very big indeed but there were plenty of little folk. I particularly liked 'Katje' who joined us at Gouda and stayed until Haarlem. Part of the rally covered the same ground as



'East Breeze' leaving Shotley with crew member Mary Gibbs



'East Breeze' at Wemeldinge and on passage to Dordrecht





previously. Some of us took the tidal River Spui, motoring and occasionally sailing through green fields of sheep or cows with the occasional windmill. Dordrecht (above) with its riot of brick houses sporting distinctive roof lines and hardly any under four hundred years old. Then Gouda: as hot as it was ten years ago. The museum haven is a beautiful spot in the canal lined old city. More houses with giant glass windows and displays of stylish ornaments or beautiful window boxes. The lakes at Kaag provided welcome cool and then we motored in to the great medieval town of Haarlem towered over by the majestic Grote-Kirk. Here I witnessed a unique event: there was a free organ concert in the church after which the audience was led along the street to a garden to listen to a live performance on the carillon. These chimes of bells are a feature in Holland and can be programmed to play anything from the Beatles to Bach but this one was played for real – apparently with a keyboard under the tower linked to the clappers. When he finished, the soloist waved to us from the tower. I also lost my radar reflector by accidentally motoring into a tree hanging over the quay.

We traversed Amsterdam, giving way to ferries and looking out for ships, arriving on the seawall in the suburb of Durgerdam. At each stage, there was a party attended by local gaffers who were not sailing. Here we were privileged to meet Molly and Joachim, two founder members of the Netherlands OGA. We began to be joined by pilot cutters and crabbers. After that, we were on open water and able to sail to Hoorn and our final port of Enkhuisen. Beautiful towns full of enticing shops. I loved the bakeries.

Prizes were awarded and raucous gaffer songs were sung, cementing relations between the UK and Dutch/Belgian gaffers. An old friend, this time in the form of storm Ernesto, chose this time to appear, leading us to abort plans for a direct crossing back to the east coast. I joined a posse of boats for the final stage, right back through the canals although stopping in different places. These included Oude Tonge which was the place worst affected in the 1953 floods which caused the deaths of 300 people and numerous animals in the area. Our own East coast was affected too with 30 deaths in Felixstowe and many more out at sea. A sobering moment.

I ended my trip as I began in 2014; single handed as my crew had commitments which couldn't wait. We sailed and motored in some testing conditions but 'East Breeze' coped with the three long passages which meant that I was able to claim my East Coast cruise dinner at the Royal Harwich Yacht Club. Little did I know when I learned to sail and bought a Memory 19 (because it looked like a boat) about 2001 that the Gaffers would change my life. I have done things I would never have done on my own and learned so very much from all of you. Thank you for another great summer.

Report & photos: Marion Shirley, East Coast OGA member

Dutch & East Coast OGA: an anniversary presentation

During the recent NL20 celebrations, East Coast Gaffers presented the Dutch OGA with a half model of 'Deva', owned by EC member, the late Jon Wainwright. Many East Coast Gaffers remember Jon Wainwright fondly, he was East Coast OGA Secretary for many years, a fiercely competitive sailor and always great company at the bar.

Perhaps his greatest legacy was the help he gave to a small group of Dutch and Belgian Gaffers to establish the Netherlands OGA in 2004. Jon was well known in the Netherlands, regularly crossing the North Sea to race in the Dutch Classics at Hellevoetsluis and cruising extensively in his small gaffer 'Deva', a Royal Mersey Rivers class Nobby built in 1914 by Crossfield of Arnside. Racing at the Dutch Classics was always competitive and the rivalry was particularly keen against 'Anemone' (The Enemy) owned by Belgian sailor Dirk Peeters, still sailing with the NL OGA in 2024.

Dirk Peeters, Joachim van Houweninge, Molly Vingerhoets, Julia Kieft and Barend Visser were inspired and encouraged by Jon, with help from the UK OGA to establish the NL OGA in 2004. 2024 was the 20th anniversary of the founding of the NL OGA and several UK Gaffers joined their Dutch friends in an anniversary cruise. The East Coast OGA Area Committee thought it would be appropriate to mark this occasion with a presentation from the East Coast to the Dutch, who are of course our closest OGA Area neighbours.

What better way to remember the encouragement and contribution of Jon than a half model of his beloved boat 'Deva' that carried him back and forth across the North Sea, having many adventures and forming great friendships.

The current owner of 'Deva', a shipwright and East Coast Young Gaffer Tom Curtis has taken the lines off 'Deva' (currently undergoing a rebuild in his yard at Pin Mill) and crafted this beautiful half model.

The presentation was made at Durgedam NL during the Anniversary Cruise, 2024 by East Coast President Paul Masters to four of the NL OGA founders (l-r in photo overleaf): Dirk Peeters, Molly Vingerhoets, Joachim van Houweninge and Julia Kieft.

The half model in a presentation box may be used by the NL OGA as a perpetual trophy to be awarded as they see fit.

I am sure Jon would have been delighted to see the NL OGA flourishing with now 130 members. One thing is certain, Jon would have absolutely loved the 'Battle of the IJsselmeer' and I think he would have been proud of the British Gaffer fleet and their 'Victory'!

The Netherlands OGA are requested to ready their vessels for 'the Battle of the River Blackwater' in 2028 at the UK OGA65 celebrations, organised by the East Coast Area.

*Report & photo of presentation (overleaf):
EC OGA Area President, Paul Masters*



'Deva' with Jon at the helm and in Tom Curtis' shed, Pin Mill



*'Anemone' at NL20
Photo: Charles Erb*





Reeuwijk Raid, October 2024

We bring extracts from two reports of this annual event. Find the full story with more photos on the website.

Sun, sailing, socialising and fabulous Dutch hospitality – what more could we have asked for on the weekend of 4-6 October, 2024 at the Reeuwijk Raid? A small deputation of Eastcoasters set off on Thursday 3 October, hopes high of another fabulous weekend of Dutch hospitality. Once again our friends across the North Sea played host to a truly memorable weekend of sailing, friendship, sunshine and even an Oktoberfest thrown in – what was not to like?

As is tradition now, the UK contingent arriving by ferry were offered the chance to camp in the Elfhoeven dinghy park opposite the sailing club. By the time PTK (called the Scull Professor by Roland Maes) and the Knife Party had arrived, fellow Eastcoasters Yvonne, Ginny, Shona and Brendan had already set up camp in a sunny spot with pretty views over the traditional Dutch verdant pastures and waterways – we were in for a great weekend! The afternoon passed in a whirl of boat unloading, camp setting up and acquiring of provisions for the weekend.

Saturday dawned and after breakfast we all made our way over to the ‘Palaver’ in the bright sunshine of a Dutch Saturday. We were in awe of the racing officials who conducted the whole briefing in English only. All our European friends were so fluent in English, there was no need for Dutch. It just left many of us laughing that in English a ‘palaver’ means a bother or a mess but in Dutch it means a briefing and a plan for the day. The beautiful gaff rigged flotilla set off having fully understood (!) the Palaver, the course and the Dutch Rules of sailing. In very light winds we had a fabulous day sailing in the picturesque scenery of Reeuwijk and surrounds – pausing for a picnic in the sunshine. A hilarious prizegiving ensued in the early evening with Edith and the committee injecting witty lines into every prize and all the time appropriately dressed for the Oktoberfest that followed! We were very well fed by the excellent chef at the Club on chicken, the most delicious melt-in-the-mouth ribs we’d ever had, sausage and perfect chips all with lashings of mayonnaise. With Dutch beer to accompany, the cherry on the cake was the music courtesy of Edith and her melodeon accompanied by Else’s beautiful singing – a good time was had by all.

Sunday was yet another sunny day at leisure on the water and a very sociable rafted up picnic but not until the Scull Professor had assisted and instructed at the sculling competition. In the sculling, many impressive performances were witnessed including those by Edgar (ably assisted/obstructed by Wiki the Dog) and Roland, but the well-deserved champion was definitely Matthias.

We would love to extend a big ‘Thank You’ to Rik, Edith and the ‘Elfhoeven team’.

Report: Clare Roberts, East Coast OGA

Before I start, I have to say that all the above Eastcoaster view is true! We (my wife Suzanne and I) left Middelburg (SW of Holland) on Friday afternoon, with 'Josephine' (of West Mersea), our Brian Kennell smacks boat.

After a jolly drive through Holland's weekend traffic jams, we arrived in Reeuwijk. It was our first time and we had no idea what to expect. On arrival we met some Dutch OGA friends and after many friendly greetings we dipped 'Josephine' in the water. Then we were told that we could get a bite on the campsite. We newbies were made very welcome by the above mentioned Eastcoasters, and what a meal had they prepared in the campsite – for a total of 17 in all!

Really nice and so kind to us newcomers. So here we are. It was a very enjoyable weekend which we will long remember. Simple messing about with boats and nice company in a superb environment. We travelled through many lakes where you can get lost easily and a many small bridges to cross. Chris from the sailing club made sure he opened them all in perfect timing for the flotillas of small boats to pass through with cyclists and walkers watching on.

Our plan next year for sure is to visit Swallows & Amazons in the UK and then do the Reeuwijk Raid again. It would be so nice to see more Eastcoasters there too!! Heartfelt thanks to Edith, Rik and all at Elfhoeven for making it such a great event!

Report: Roland Maes, NL OGA

Photos: Guus de Koster



Three EC Members cross the bar

Bernard Patrick

I recall Bernard as a gentle, generous, humorous, sociable and interesting man with a stocky short-stature (fit for small yachts) and even Yorkshire brogue. We seemed always to be in sympathy with a shared interest in all aspects of boats of course, but also other things – technology (he was a chemical engineer), motorbikes and music. Bernard was a most delightful person to have worked with and for, the ideal boat-builder's client! I first knew Bernard in the summer of 1997 when he came to me to build his boat 'Molly Cobbler'. He'd just retired and had a clear plan of exactly what he was going to do. He must have evolved this in his mind over quite a period of time. Bernard had chosen a design for a 'Tosher' by Selway Fisher Design. He got Paul Fisher to modify the bow to his satisfaction, supplying me with adapted drawings to make the changes to the rake of the stem. He was also going to add a proper cabin. He'd built boats before as an amateur and was keen to work with me building his new boat. I was to build the hull with him fitting it out.

Fabian Bush

Captain Richard Woodman

Richard Woodman was born in London and went to sea at the age of 16 in cargo liners trading worldwide. Qualifying as a navigating officer, he served in deep water merchant ships and Ocean Weather Ships until shortly before his marriage, when he joined the Trinity House Service. After an active career in Trinity House during which he commanded the Corporation's flagship 'THV Patricia', Richard retired in 1999. He was elected a Younger and then in 2006 an Elder Brother of Trinity House.

I was lucky enough to know, sail and drink with Richard for many years, his knowledge was far wider and deeper than my own and it was a privilege to spend time together. Richard and I spoke on many occasions of the joy of East Coast sailing and the lovely gaff rig. Fair winds and a safe harbour, mate.

Tony Fernandes

Peter Maynard

Peter has been the OGA's 'man in Maldon' for many years. Maldon was where the OGA was founded and where Peter was proud to be the reviver of the Maldon Town Regatta at the beginning of the century. His quiet, warm, friendly approach to others made them want to help him and be part of his team. Sailing was in his blood. Peter owned a series of craft and sailed long distances with his life-time partner and wife Jo. As the family arrived, they joined the crew to add to the fun. His sailing embraced both Bermudan and Gaffer – he seemed to be at home in all craft and in all weathers. Underneath that relaxed persona a steely accountant lurked, but you would never know. He helped audit the OGA accounts for many years. Thank-you Peter for your strong support and friendship.

Richard Giles



'Diamond' CK250

Tony Judd shares his memories of purchase and delivery of the smack yacht 'Diamond' CK250 in Autumn 2013.

After the shock of selling the 108 year old 'Alice & Florrie' following 23 years ownership, it was an open question whether to give up the sea; buy a period motor boat to give easy travel on the East coast which we were experiencing on Midlands rivers with 'Ivy May'; or to buy another sailing boat. The thrust of the plan was a motorboat and we searched Milford Haven, Beccles, Windsor, Maldon and Poole. 'Sirius Star' of Poole was the best of the bunch for me but Shirley was having doubts. During our search, we had seen a Hayward Bawley yacht, 'Lapwing' very similar to Alice, but she was a big project. We found a Tyrrell & Young smack yacht, 'Diamond'. She's moulded from the hull of the 1922 Paglesham smack yacht 'Secret'. She felt just right, smaller, less maintenance, decks that don't leak, 86 years younger, tacking without going on the foredeck . . . I came away saying that if it was to be another sailing boat, here she was.

25 October 2013

The deal was done. She had tacked and manoeuvred effortlessly as we wove about the top of the Medway estuary on the acceptance sail. I needed a new dinghy. Catherine Dines, of M J Lewis yacht brokers, quickly sourced us one which we bought on the strength of a thoroughly unflattering photograph. 'Diamond' was moved to Gillingham Marina but the weather forecasters had been predicting 90mph winds for a week and there were other logistical problems. I'd need to sail to the Blackwater, beating up to Downs Road boatyard, Maldon to fetch the dinghy, back onto my mooring in Alresford Creek with the dinghy to get ashore, at neap tides to do the trip in daylight with the marina lock closed before 8am in winter. Meanwhile, Autumn had woken up and the Atlantic was now powering in with one formidable low pressure system after another. Weather windows were few and brief. Only a fool or a very confident man takes a new boat to sea on a good forecast knowing that if he is delayed by only a few hours, the next gale will be upon him.

Friday 15 November, 2013

Sleeping aboard on Thursday, I was out with the tide in the morning, picking up a buoy across the river and taking time to work out and rig the steering bowsprit, Wykeham Martin roller reefing jib, check the workings of the windlass (new to me), hoist and set the main. With the wind West F3 (forecast NW 5-7) I boldly sailed off the mooring and headed down river, very soon hauling my wind as it veered into the North, even with some East at one point, and freshened. The Medway looks straightforward on the chart, but I haven't sailed it for decades. I suddenly realised things were wrong, Darnet Ness Fort was missing. I then grasped I had sailed south of it, not north, so doubled back quick before I would ground on the falling tide. It was a good limber up sail and the first chance to stow sail in a bit of a lop, not polished, but achieved. Then motor into Stansgate, followed by Sharfleet Creek. My chart showed a green lateral mark as sitting on the end of the spit, with a wreck on the west side of the Sharfleet entrance, opposite the buoy.

Find the full story of his weekend delivery passage on the Eastcoaster website . . .

Monday 18 November, 2013

There was no change overnight or first thing, but now the business was to enter Alresford Creek. I suddenly realised I was running late and had decided to check the seawater engine coolant filter, which was clean. However on starting the engine it became clear that water was not flowing. Stopped quickly and checked the filter, priming it with the seacock shut. This helped a bit but for some reason the water flow was well down and hot. This was some worry all the way up the Colne. Manoeuvring at slow ahead in Alresford Creek I picked up my old mooring and the warning sounded; no water. I turned the engine off as quick as possible to avoid damage, finished the mooring arrangements and returned to the filter. Twice more I primed this and then the engine seemed to recover flow and the water temperature reduced. However I think the impeller may now be damaged and may have already been damaged to find pulling water so difficult. There is a spare on board and this should be fitted before leaving the creek again. The day had opened a little and I lit the fire. 'Diamond' settled nicely into the big wallow that 'Alice & Florrie' had created, sitting only a foot out of her marks in the mud soup. The mud surrounding the wallow is firmer and gel like, but no good for humans without splachers. I hope the new boat doesn't explore the rim and lay right over.

Tuesday 19 November, 2013

On a cold and breezy but sunny day at last, Shirley had collected my car and we met on the hard to empty the dinghy of all the gear and chain it up to my old post. Finally there was the 188 mile slog home, the end to the first adventure in 'Diamond'. That trip involved six rivers and five creeks. It was nice to see it all again. I looked forward to happy sailing on the coast and creeks, and must re-explore the whole area.

Words: Tony Judd

Website, Social Media, Print & email

The choice is yours!

Every registered EC OGA Member who has provided us with an email address receives a regular mailing with updates and links to new content online. Please note that both Family members may submit their email address. News is published on the Eastcoaster website: www.eastcoastgaffers.org.uk

The EC Gaffers Facebook page is updated regularly and there are WhatsApp groups for social 'chat' and events. Events information and booking forms are on the main OGA website:

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

The Association website provides easy access to 'East Coast Gaffers Online': Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp and EASTCOASTER (online as well as archived PDF copies to download and print).

This quarterly full colour PDF digest of posts is available for download to print at home.

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

For £6 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: Sarah Adie, Arpajon, 25a Harwich Road, Mistley, CO11 1ND

If you and/or another family Member in your household has an email address and would like to receive the monthly mailings, or you have changed your email address, please contact Colin Stroud, Association Secretary to confirm your details.

Contact Colin by email: secretary@oga.org.uk



*Above: 'Diamond' taking part in the East Coast Race, 2018
Photo: Beverley Yates*

*Below: 'Diamond' running down the Crouch (what we bought her for)
Photo: Sue Lewis*

