

OGA

EAST COAST GAFFERS

EASTCOASTER

Newsletter of the East Coast OGA



Racing at the Deben Rally, May 2024 Photo: Sandy Miller

Summer hasn't really been much in evidence this year yet but the weather didn't deter participants in three events for which we've received reports and photos: Deben Rally, Swallows & Amazons and the Southwold Rally. By the time this is published we will have had the 60th East Coast Race on 27 July.

Sadly, we report on the passing of East Coast member Bob Berk last month, well known to many members.

In May, our featured boat was the fleet of Deben Cherubs with June and July being 'La Mouette' and 'Red Red Rose', two of the smaller boats on the East Coast. The much larger spritsail-rigged, engineless barge 'Blue Mermaid' paid the East Coast a visit on her tour of historic ports and harbours.

We hear from Daniel Stoker about his exploits with 'Catsnip' at the Three Rivers Race and as we go to press, several East Coast Gaffers are planning their passage across the North Sea to join the Dutch 20th Anniversary Tour in August.

Your Editor is always pleased to receive contributions for inclusion in Eastcoaster, online and/or in print so please get in touch with stories, snippets of news and photos to share!

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2024 events

There's hopefully still time (and weather) for some Summer sailing . . . Full details & booking are available online: www.oga.org.uk/areas/east_coast/east_coast_events.html

3 – 17 August: Netherlands Anniversary Tour

Several East Coast Gaffers have signed up to join the Dutch OGA as they celebrate their 20th Anniversary.

24 - 26 August, River Stour Rally

Sail up the Stour for a rally, then join the Summer Cruise!

25 August - 1 September, East Coast Summer Cruise

Starting at Shotley, the Summer Cruise is planned to take in Walton Backwaters and the Rivers Stour, Orwell & Deben.

4 - 6 October: 20th Reeuwijk Raid

Trail your boat to the Netherlands for sailing and socialising.

2 November: East Coast Area AGM

Royal Harwich Yacht Club

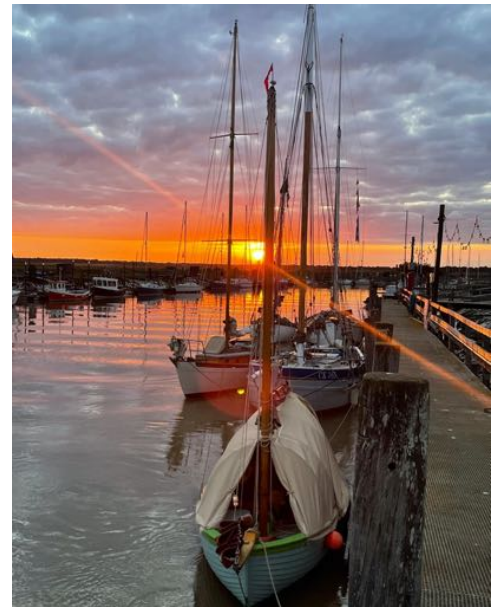
SB 'Blue Mermaid' at Woodbridge

Over 800 people visited the Thames Sailing Barge 'Blue Mermaid' at Woodbridge Tide Mill over the weekend 7 – 10 June, 2024. 'Blue Mermaid', owned and operated by Sea-Change Sailing Trust is undertaking a ten port tour of the English east coast supported by the Heritage Fund. The purpose of her port visits is to enable members of the public from waterside communities, where Thames sailing barges would have been a common sight, to re-connect with their maritime heritage. In each port the barge is open to members of the public to come aboard, have a look around, meet the crew.

In times gone by barges would have arrived at the Tide Mill under sail but in those days the River Deben was not full of moorings. 'Blue Mermaid' was assisted on her passage upriver by local marine contractor Tam Grundy and his tug 'Joanna'. 'Blue Mermaid' seemed to double in size as she approached the Tide Mill Quay at high water on Friday. There was just enough water for her 3' draft on the top of the tide and she made a very fine sight indeed on a berth where many barges would once have laid to load and unload cargo.

To highlight the historical purpose of the Thames sailing barge and the Tide Mill Quay 'Blue Mermaid' delivered a sack of wheat grown in Kent, loaded at Gravesend. In return, Tide Mill supplied the barge with the equivalent weight in bagged flour for delivery to Brightlingsea. Once there, it will be rowed up St Osyth Creek by members of Brightlingsea Coastal Rowing Club, to the sailing barge 'May', home of the Bread and Roses Barge Bakery.

Words & photos: Judy Harrison, East Coast OGA member & Assistant Executive Officer, Sea-Change Sailing Trust



Southwold Rally, Daniel Stoker



EC OGA featured boats

In May we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Deben Cherub as our featured 'fleet' followed in June by 'la Mouette', the newest boat to be built at Woodbridge Boatyard (formerly Eversons). Our featured boat in July raced with the OGA in the 1970s and has now been restored to her former glory, 'Red Red Rose'.

'la Mouette'

Our featured boat for June, 'la Mouette', was launched two years ago in 2022 to coincide with the East Coast OGA's Jubilee Rally and this year she was welcomed once again to the OGA Rally on the Deben over the May Bank Holiday Weekend, 24 – 27 May 2024.

Built at Eversons (Woodbridge) Boatyard, this new traditional clinker dinghy is built of copper-fastened larch on English oak with a mahogany transom, shear planks and thwarts with Douglas fir spars and bronze fittings. At just 11' in length 'La Mouette' is designed to be a faithful replica of the dinghies built in great numbers by Everson & Sons from 1889 to 1960's. Her owner Vicki Jessel who was brought up with a family owning a Falmouth Quay Punt was thrilled to be able to commission her own dinghy, supporting local trades. Built on the Deben, 'La Mouette' has traditional sails from Suffolk Sails, Woodbridge with rigging and varnishing undertaken by the experienced shipwrights at the Woodbridge Boatyard. Vicki even provided the oak from her family farm for the stern keel.

With her gunter rig 'La Mouette' can be rigged quickly with just a single halyard and she is easy to row. This year a brass topped plate was fitted to her stern to carry an e-propulsion electric engine which means she can go further afield and still get back to her pontoon in time for the tide. Vicki spends as much time as she can exploring the Deben, taking her two Jack Russells for picnics on the beach and enjoying the nimble, stable and seakindly nature of 'La Mouette'. She is looking forward to gaining more experience of river sailing and will be back supporting the OGA events as soon as she can.

'La Mouette' was displayed at the 2022 Boat Show and was shortlisted in the Classic Boat Awards 2023 New Sailing Vessel of the Year. Currently there is a second 'Everson 11' being constructed at the busy Woodbridge Boatyard and it is hoped that this might be the second of more clinker dinghies with their irresistible romance and timeless charm.

Words: Vicki Jessel



'la Mouette' sails on the River Deben Photo: Sandy Miller

The Deben Cherubs

Everson's Yard on the River Deben, Suffolk, now Woodbridge Boatyard produced one of the first series production yachts on the English East Coast, the 21ft. 'Cherub' Class. 17 were built between 1924 and 1937, many are still afloat and racing.

'Cherub' CC2

The original Deben Cherub, designed by and built for Mr. A.R.J. Curjel in 1924. In the 1990s she was found abandoned in the saltings near Aldeburgh but rescued and restored by Bruce Miller. She is now owned by Sebastian Watt and based out of Woodbridge Boatyard, well-loved and regularly used.

'Sea Nymph' CC3

'Sea Nymph' was built in 1924 for Capt. Pit Miller as 'Etonia'. In the 1970s she was taken to the Netherlands where she was very active on the OGA circuit. She is currently being worked upon in the Netherlands and her owners plan to join us for the OGA Rally in May 2024 (with or without her).

'Sea Pig' CC4

Originally built at Everson & Sons in 1930, 'Sea Pig' is one of the few boats to have entered all the OGA East Coast Races since 1963 until the late 1990s. In earlier races she sailed under the number CC19 but in 1964 when sailed to the Deben it was discovered that only 17 Cherubs had been built and 'Sea Pig' was actually CC4. An extra suit of sails had been cut, but no hull built. In the summer of 1939, when owned by Surgeon Commander Curjel of Woodbridge, brother to the designer of the Cherub class, A.R.J. Curjel (owner of 'Cherub') she cruised to Portsmouth but on her return was caught by the onset of war and laid up at Dover where she was damaged by enemy shells. Refitted after the war and bought by Mr. Titheridge in 1948, she was sailed extensively in home waters during pub closing hours and occasionally as far as the Isle of Wight. She was lying in Heybridge Basin for several years, in need of someone to complete her restoration and in 2017 she was taken on by Thomas Morley and moved to Devon. Sadly, he had to stop work on her and she is now owned by Woodbridge Boatyard.

'Rohaise' CC5

'Rohaise II' was commissioned by R.W. Shipman and is still owned by his son David with only a short spell of her life spent out of the family's ownership. 'Rohaise II' is currently at Larkman's Boatyard in Melton having some work done but sadly was not quite ready to join the OGA Deben Rally in May.

'Lindy Lou' CC6

The sixth of 17 Deben Cherubs, 'Lindy Lou', was built at Everson & Sons in 1931 and has spent her long sailing life around the East Coast. Spending some years called 'Fortuna' before returning to her original name in 2020, she is based out of Woodbridge Boatyard, well-loved and regularly used.

In 2020 'Lindy Lou' was restored at The Woodbridge Boatyard (formerly Everson & Sons) where she had been built nearly 90 years previously. Her hull was stripped back to bare wood, several planks were replaced or splined in larch, her deck was replaced in Robbins Elite ply sheaved in glass atop several new deck beams. She received new cabin sides and coaming in iroko, new oak stem, refurbished spars and new rubbing strakes and toe rails. Whilst carrying out the restoration a new auxiliary propulsion system was installed, converting her from outboard



'Sea Pig' OGA Archives



'Lindy Lou' racing at SYH Regatta, 2023
Photos: Beverley Yates



drive to inboard with a 12hp Dolphin petrol engine coupled to all new running gear. 'Lindy Lou' was finished with new Epifanes brightwork, signwriting and a custom boom tent.

'Lufra' CC7

'Lufra' was built in 1931 for a Mr. Sullivan and was run for some years as a hire boat by Fred Upson becoming the first taste of sailing for many locals. These days she is in the Isles of Scilly and has recently been restored by her current owner.

'Charity' CC8

'Charity' started life in 1932 as 'Snark', built for a Mr. Crockett. According to our records she spent part of her life at Suffolk Yacht Harbour. She was owned by Chaloner Chute during whose time she was in fine order and sailed from Chichester Harbour, being quite active within the OGA. Chaloner tracked her down on the Thames 15 years after having sold her and organised her recovery back to Woodbridge. She now stands under cover in the yard's ownership, seeking a new custodian to take on the project of restoring her.

'Agility' CC9

Built in 1932 for a Mr. Gallop 'Agility' is rumoured to have spent part of her life in Torquay. Her current condition and location are unknown.

'Curlew' CC10

Built in 1932 for Mr. Welford. She is currently on the hard in Lowestoft near to the Excelsior Trust.

'Ariel' CC11

Originally built as 'Annette' in 1934 for a Mr. Gibbons, on 25 October, 2019, Deben Cherub 'Ariel' was relaunched at The Woodbridge Boatyard, Everson's Wharf. The current owner is Tim Everson, great-grandson of The Woodbridge Boatyard's founder, Alfred A Everson and the restoration was carried out at Woodbridge Boatyard. The following year she received the Classic Boat Restoration Award (under 40).

'Sea Swallow' CC12 Built 1934 for Dr. C. T. East.

'Jubilee' CC14

'Jubilee' was built in 1935 for Rev. D. Symon. She was owned and sailed by Brian Green for 35 years until his passing in 2019. At this time she was purchased by Woodbridge Boatyard where she is regularly sailed by the team. She sails under the borrowed number of CC17 ('Dunlin').

'Windsong' CC15

Originally 'Ceres' and built in 1936 she was last heard from in 2019 when she was in a barn near Dundee. Unfortunately, we have lost contact with her since and would greatly appreciate any help in making contact again.

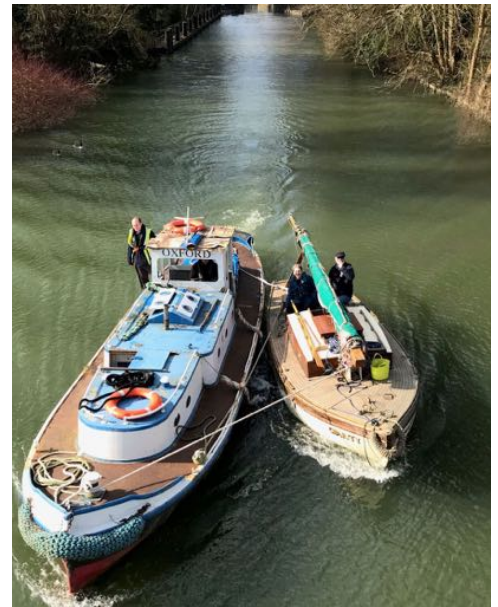
'Wild Rose' CC16 Built 1936 for Capt. Pitt Miller

'Dunlin' CC17 Built 1936 as 'Violet Mary', she is the only Cherub known to have been destroyed.

'Lynette' CC18

'Lynette' is the last Deben Cherub built (1937) and unique for her short cabin and extended cockpit as her original owner liked to fish from her. She spent a considerable amount of time in Cornwall and is now based out of Woodbridge Boatyard.

Words and research: Matt Lis, Woodbridge Boatyard



'Charity' being towed back to Woodbridge
Photo: Chaloner Chute



'Lynette' racing at SYH Classics, 2023
Photo: Beverley Yates



'Jubilee' racing at SYH Classics, 2023
Photo: Beverley Yates



'Red Red Rose'

Our featured boat for July is another amazing restoration undertaken by East Coast Gaffer, Pete Thomas.

Length on deck (LOD): 16.20 ft

Waterline Length (LWL): 15.30 ft

Beam: 5.30 ft

Draft: 1.90 ft

'Red Red Rose' was originally built in larch with clinker planking on sawn larch frames in 1965 at Baltasound on the island of Unst in Shetland by A Sandison & Sons. There is no record of her journey south to the English East Coast but it is thought she was commissioned by someone from the area. In the 1970s and early 1980s 'Red Red Rose' is listed in the OGA archives as having taken part in the Annual East Coast Race when she was kept at Arthur Holts Yard in Heybridge Basin. She never distinguished herself in the Class III races and then disappears from the record . . .

Rescued in 2023, having been left outside for too many years neglected, Pete 'the knife' delivered 'Red Red Rose' to Pete's home on a trailer and hoisted her into his workshop. Pete spent the spring working his usual magic and she's looking good as new, ready for launch when there's time amongst all the other pressing projects. Pete started the project with a good strip down to inspect the whole boat. When he first saw her he had suggested that a box of matches and paraffin may be the only solution. However, many planks were split or damaged but repairable and four of the frames were in reasonable condition with the fifth frame just needing to be mended before refitting. Many of the planks were in need of minor repairs. Pete removed the keel because the grip fast nails used were not holding. All holes were plugged to accept new bronze screws and the timber was found to be sound. The new gunwales were gently coaxed to form the sheer with strapping rather than steaming.

With the keel refitted it was time to paint the inside, but not before the entire hull was soaked through with a mixture of Cuprinol, white spirit and linseed oil. The rudder was sound but Pete had to fashion a new pintle. With the inside complete and looking good in blue and white, the outside of the hull was finished with varnished topsides. There's very little known about her history or original design. Pete thinks she's a bit of a hybrid, similar to the Dysart Yole, a Fifie boat-type from the east coast of Scotland. 'Red Red Rose' originally had a dipping lugsail rig but Pete's already made the mast and is seeking out a balanced lug sail for her.

If anyone has information about the 'in between' years, do send it to the Editor.

Restored ready for relaunch by Pete Thomas, East Coast Gaffer, 2024

A tribute: Robert (Bob) Berk

It is with great sadness that I have to report that Bob died at home with family in Faversham last Saturday, 15 June 2024. He died of cancer while suffering from dementia but he still knew who was with him at the time. I have been in touch with his daughter Holly over the last couple of years and she hoped that we could share some memories of Bob for the OGA membership. Bob was born 25 February, 1939.

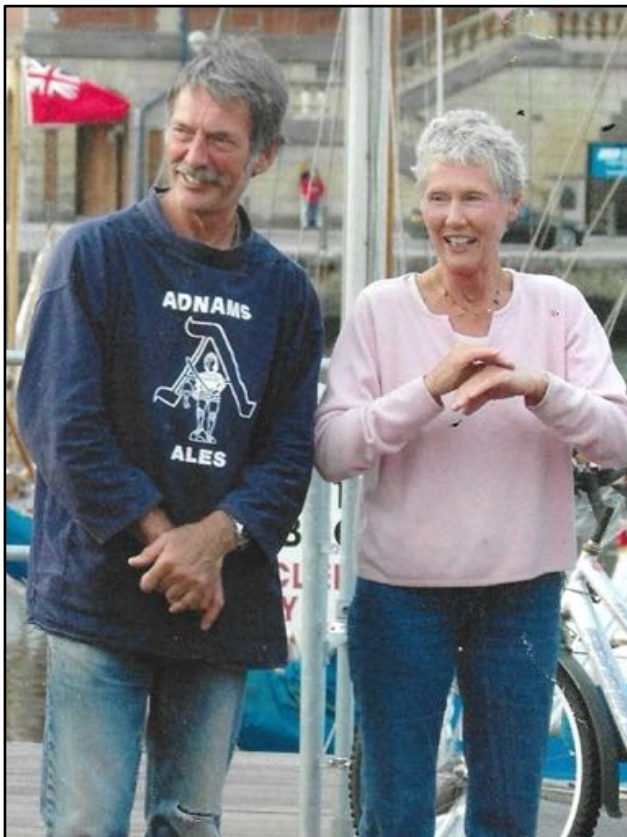
Typically we knew Bob as the 'Master Sailor' of both 'Crow' and 'Dirty Girty'. I say 'Master' as he was always the man to try to beat but alas that was seldom possible. He knew all the tricks from the design of a craft to the sailing of it! He started with the Gaffers in a small open boat called 'Phoebe' around 30 years ago. Then he decided that he could design and build a Gaffer Beater. He did that with his much famed 'Dirty Girty' which to this day still beats us all.

When 'DG' became too painful for him to physically sail (and that happens to anyone who sails her) he bought a lovely clipper bowed gaffer called 'Airlie'. He continued to beat us with that one too, thus proving that he really was a skilled sailor as well as designer. With Phil Bolger's design and influence, Bob had 'Crow' built by Spirit Yachts and she was a masterful craft with so many special 'Bob' features. By this time he had met and fallen for Lena Reekie. Together they sailed 'Crow' and her Dauntless 'Linnæa' with her characterful dog Matey. 'Linnæa' featured as the backdrop to Lena's wake, held at the Faversham boatyard, led by Bob on what was a very windy weekend.

Bob started his career at the BBC as a set designer being involved in various very well known programmes we all love, as do many of our Young Gaffers! These range from episodes of Colditz, Monty Python, Survivors, Dad's Army, Top of the Pops, Rosie and Jim and the Teletubbies. Quite a roll call and probably a list never called in Gaffer circles. Bob was a shy and retiring chap when it came to talking about things other than sailing with us.

Truly, Bob was a great designer and sailor, character and 'racer'. He will surely be missed by us all.

Pete Elliston, OGA East Coast Area Secretary



Deben Rally: 24 - 27 May

On Bank Holiday Friday evening, 24 May, 2024, just over 40 boats arrived by road, sea and river at Waldringfield on the River Deben. Why were they all converging on this quiet village to moor up and sleep aboard or set up camp in the 'top field' above the Boatyard?

The East Coast OGA had teamed up with Woodbridge & Waldringfield Boatyards to host a joint rally: to celebrate 100 years of the Deben Cherubs being built at Woodbridge Boatyard (formerly Eversons); to host the postponed Teamac OGA Gaffling 4.1 Championship and to run a series of races for four classes of traditional boats.

As the 'fleet' gathered on pontoons or buoys, on the beach or on trailers ashore for the weekend it was clearly representative of what the OGA really stands for. There was a truly eclectic mix of traditional boats in all shapes, sizes, rigs, propulsion and construction materials. The 70 or more members, family and friends gathered to enjoy a holiday weekend 'messing about on the river' with a bit of racing, cruising, chatting and most importantly having fun.

Arriving by trailer (one from as far afield as Wiltshire) were two smacks boats 'Papa Stour' and 'Joy', three Gaffling 4.1 dinghies 'Essling', 'Suffling' and 'The Shrimp', two small dinghies 'Molly' and 'Sine Nomine', two Drascombe Luggers 'Millie' and 'Truant', a Heir Island Sloop 'Songbird' and the Canoe Yawl 'Doty' embarking on her maiden sail.

The Essex smack 'Transcur' towing her smacksboat 'Happy Days', a Tamarisk 'East Breeze' and Cape Cutter 21 'Minnie' left the River Orwell in company on Friday morning, having anchored overnight in the moonlight. Also making their way up the coast and over the Deben Bar to join the Rally were the Winkle Brig 'Philomena', Cornish Yawl 'Sonamara' towing his smacksboat 'Ettie and the motor launch 'Stardrift'. Several boats arrived under sail or tow from their usual moorings along the River Deben: the Albert Strange Yawl 'Mist', Laurent Giles Ketch once owned by Arthur Ransome, 'Peter Duck', Clovelly Picarooner 'Agnes May', small dinghy 'Little Auk', Deben Luggers 'Ruddy Darter' and 'Deben Lugger', five Deben Cherubs 'Ariel', 'Jubilee', 'Lindy Lou', 'Lynette' and 'Cherub', two dinghies built at Woodbridge Boatyard 'la Mouette' and 'Cariad', a Drascombe Dabber 'Sula', an Ian Oughtred Guillemot 'Cachalette' and last but not least two Shrimper 19s 'Joelle' and 'Grebe'.

Whilst not entrants, the following boats also supported the event: 1937 Everson's one-off 'Black Cat', Everson's-built Aldeburgh One Design 'Thalassa', Frank Knights-built clinker launch 'Mistress of Orford', Fairey Huntress 'Loyal Huntress', historic Dutch tug 'Else' and 1900 Dutch sailing barge 'Trouw Hulp'.

After an evening briefing, a provisional start time for racing on Saturday was proposed as 1100, weather permitting as the forecasts seem to be very unreliable at present. Saturday dawned with little wind and drizzle in the air as those intending to race gathered at the start line between the Committee Boat 'Oystercatcher', kindly lent to the OGA for the weekend by the 5th Woodbridge Sea Scouts and motor launch 'Stardrift'.



The race was timed to reach Woodbridge Boatyard for a 1230 celebration lunch in the 'Phoenix Works', probably dating back to c.1912 when the original structure burned down. This is where 'Cherub' was built, the first of the Deben Cherub class, in 1924 when the yard was then called Everson & Sons Ltd. The current staff of Waldringfield & Woodbridge Boatyards surpassed all expectations with an excellent buffet lunch of sausages in lovely crusty rolls with fried onions and plenty of relishes washed down with a choice of tea or coffee.

At 1430 the second race was against the tide back to Waldringfield for an evening barbecue, live music, a briefing for Sunday and 'interim' race results. The weather on Sunday was much better than forecast. With low water at 0900 the race started at 1000 in more drizzle with strong winds forecast, to sail downriver to a turning mark below Ramsholt returning to finish at the Rocks. By the afternoon the sun was shining for lunch on the beach before sailing back. Some ate aboard or in their camper vans whilst others enjoyed supper at the local hostelry run by Deben Inns 'The Maybush'. Later, as the Race Officers crunched numbers quietly on their laptop, there was a campfire to enjoy for an evening of sailing yarns, passing the port and camaraderie.

Postponed from 2023 due to inclement weather, the Teamac Gaffling 4.1 Championships was held on the final day of the Deben Rally, 27 May, 2024. The morning dawned with strong winds forecast and the race involved sailing downriver against tide and wind from Waldringfield to The Rocks, just above Ramsholt on the River Deben. A few boats had to depart early, leaving the River Deben to catch the tide south. The rest of the OGA fleet and three Gafflings sailed downriver which made a real spectacle on both the water and on the beach. Gathering at The Rocks provided an excellent 'grandstand beach view' of the race for competing skippers and crews along with all the spectators. A figure of eight course was set and the final took place after three heats. First and second prizes, sponsored by Teamac Paints, along with the series awards for the weekend races were awarded afterwards as the tide encroached on an ever-diminishing beach.

Visit the Eastcoaster website for race results, video and more photos from the most successful weekend.

www.eastcoastgaffers.org.uk

Photo credits & captions pp. 8 - 10:

'Transcur' moored opposite the Boatyard, Beverley Yates

'Sine Nomine', Beverley Yates

'Philomena', Marion Shirley

Woodbridge Boatyard lunch party, Beverley Yates

Water taxi, Marion Shirley

Gafflings at The Rocks, Beverley Yates

Racing on the Deben, Sandy Miller

Our thanks go to the following:

Woodbridge & Waldringfield Boatyards: Eric Reynolds, Matt & Andy Lis with all their staff, helpers and volunteers.

Emma and Mark Barton for making us so welcome at the 'top field' camp ground.

5th Woodbridge Sea Scouts for loan of 'Oystercatcher'.

Teamac Paints for sponsorship of the Gaffling 4.1 project.

East Coast OGA organisers: Nick Phillips, Sarah Adie and Paul Masters and Race Officer: Jo Masters





Swallows and Amazons: 7 - 9 June, 2024

Your Editor was pleased to receive so many reports and photos from this popular event, celebrating its 25th anniversary and still very popular with younger Gaffers. The first is from Tim Fenner, travelling down from 'up north'! Maddy Phillips, Sarah Adie & Maddy Masters also contributed reports from different perspectives. Thankyou to everyone for your stories and photos!

Two of us from the eternal winter of a Northern Spring booked to take part in the event this year, June 2024. One of us from the Yorkshire Wolds and myself from the Yorkshire Dales. One towing a caravan and one towing the Andrew Wolstenholme designed (based on 'Pipkin') 12' 3" Catboat 'Inisheen' built by David Moss Boatbuilders in 1986.

We planned to meet on Thursday 6 June, 2024 at the Walton & Frinton Yacht Club where the event began. However, Wednesday and Thursday morning for one of us was spent in A&E, the other being helped to the venue by the AA, following failure of the boat trailer suspension. It was a great encouragement that Pete 'the Knife' and friends, long time attendees at Swallows & Amazons weekend, offered considerable help with the trailer. The Club was able to offer 'Inisheen' a berth until the trailer was fixed. A&E were pretty helpful too! The Thursday evening BBQ was set in an orchard next door to the Club owned by kind folk who have lent the orchards since the event first began. Excellent BBQ fire and large gazebo in case of rain – it did – the only time in the whole weekend. The weather was in fact bright and breezy all weekend though it did cloud over later in the day on Sunday. The breeze held fast in the southwest going northwest as the weekend progressed. The Walton & Frinton YC is on Foundry Reach which is entirely tidal with at best three hours of access either side HW. The ebb starts straight after HW, the tide doesn't 'stand' at all.

Friday was lovely with F3-4 SW wind forecast and that's what we got. A great sail into Oakley Creek leading off north from the central Hamford Water in bright sunshine to see seals. I have seen seals before but not that close or so many! Back across Hamford Water, again with a following breeze and hint of wind over tide chop to the Walton Channel where the F4+ on the nose tried folks windward sailing. Great fun for most, requiring a reef for some, a trip to the lee shore for others and despite a spirited effort, the scow had a lie down. Fortunately there was back up and all casualties were towed safely home. Saturday, race day and the same sort of breeze except for more north in the wind. The race is weather permitting round Horsey Island, starting at the seaward end of Foundry Creek on the Walton Channel and ending at the Club. As folk found their feet, reefs that were put in before leaving the Club were taken out and almost everybody was on full power, closely packed near the windward shore up Walton Channel heading again for Hamford Water where there was a dead muzzler. The fleet spread out and places were gained and lost before heading south into Kirby Creek and into the wide and relatively peaceful Wade.

I have been there before years ago and ran aground but the Club racing marks in The Wade are a useful guide to the best water and there is little tide. From there we headed past Titchmarsh Marina, joined the Twizzle and back down Foundry Reach. There were no incidents and all were safely gathered in before a front went through with an increase in wind with a shift further into the north. After easing our troubled minds and bodies in the Clubhouse the race results were worked out and announced at a sunlit evening dinner in their lovely restaurant.

The Walton & Frinton is a fine Club with an excellent modern building located beside the boatyards at the head of Foundry Reach. After 25 years providing for this event the East Coast Gaffers have got the job sorted and the welcome is truly great. I had trailer trouble and the two Petes put me back on the road. The location for campervans and caravans overlooking the 'Pond' is brilliant. Tents pitched in the peace of the orchard. The only issue is limited time on the water which can be extended with a favourable wind or an outboard to get you up the Reach against the ebb. There were a good few young folk there as well. All in all very inviting!

Words: Tim Fenner

Saturday, 8 June dawned suitably cloudy for an East Coast event, when over 20 boats turned out to compete for the 25th instalment of the Swallows and Amazons race including both Gafflings, a few duck-powered smacks boats and a variety of other small gaffers including a scow, a peterboat and a couple of luggers. After a leisurely briefing to remind everyone of the course (anticlockwise round Horsey Island) and warn our less local participants of the shallow areas (all of it, all the time), nothing was left for it but to get out on the water.

There was a healthy breeze but none of the force 5 that was forecast which was probably fortunate for most of us, although it did mean the majority took less time to get to the start line than anticipated. The buoy marking the start line had lost its flag in a winter gale making it somewhat hard to spot amongst the trot of mooring buoys. Indeed, it was picked up by a yacht looking for a mooring two minutes before the start – a very understandable mistake but undeniably the best place to be if you wanted a good view.

The race itself was fun and fast paced, luckily with no appearance of the infamous tidal vortex that materialises occasionally at Stone Point. It was very much all to play for with much shuffling of contestants, especially on the windward leg up Hamford Water. Despite some rather ominous clouds I don't think we had any rain, but there were a few seals around the Wade who had come out to admire the fleet. After some slight confusion on whether the final mark was actually a mark (or not), cleared up by Will Thomas (thanks Will!), everyone made it back to the W&FYC before the tide turned to potentially wash them back out to sea.

I'd like to make honourable mention of Elliott and Teddy Phillips, recognised for being the youngest helm and youngest crew on 'Edith G', Tim Fenner and Chris Nash who travelled the furthest and Georgina Tall for her excellent work for the Younger Gaffers Initiative. All in all an excellent race and I'm sure everyone is looking forward to competing again next year!

Words: Maddy Phillips



'Catsnip', Daniel Stoker



*above, Mary Gibbs
below, Georgina Tall*





On Sunday 9 June we woke up to blue skies and a chilly northeasterly wind at the top end of F4. This was too much for some, though others reefed and in all 15 boats ventured out for a sail and picnic, setting off before the club's own dinghy racing fleets launched. We gathered at the end of the creek and sailed towards Hamford Water where the water seemed unexpectedly flat. There was no shelter at Stone Point so we headed one by one into the Dardanelles, to anchor for our picnic lunch. This was a simply lovely and very special moment to be part of as most hadn't ventured up this creek before, not even some of the locals! We anchored together or apart, rising slowly with the tide to look over the disappearing saltings towards the main channel beyond. It was truly magical!

'Inisheen' weighed anchor first with their long drive to Windermere in mind, heading back towards the creek entrance and the main channel. Read 'Inisheen' skipper Tim's account of the weekend here. 'Minnow' headed in the opposite direction, further into the creek, to investigate the wall which now blocks the creek at the south shore of Horsey Island. One by one, other boats upped anchor and followed. The Gafflings, 'Catsnip', 'Philomena', 'Bel Ami' and smacksboat 'Ripple', with Sunday's youngest crew, 18 month old Max Masters, took the deep draught route home. Several smacksboats did make it over the wall, in one way or another. Apparently there is one place where you can cross, on a big tide, without bumping. Ask 'Eureka' . . .

Words: Sarah Adie

I can confidently say that attending this blissful sailing weekend constitutes some of my earliest sailing memories. These include the excitement of being bundled into the car after school with far too much camping stuff, customary for any family with three young children. I really don't remember much of the sailing itself, rather an overall feeling of exhilaration after having explored the little creeks, messed around in the mud and spent the day outside on the water. My strongest memories surround the whimsical paper boat race and scrabbling around under the club house in a desperate attempt to scavenge anything to build the best boat and become that year's boat building victor, all worth it for a bag of gummy sweets of course. Attending Swallows and Amazons as a child truly felt like a serene little bubble and was one of the best weekends of the year. It's safe to say a few years have passed since then, and although no longer a sugar fuelled hyperactive 10-year-old I had a great time this year.

Many of that same gaggle of muddy kids were in attendance in adult form and the weekend maintained its reputation for being a wonderful couple of days of sailing, camping and delicious food with fabulous company. Rather than mudlarking and paper boat building I had the pleasure of sailing one of the East Coast OGA's very own Gafflings, it was an absolute blast!

With Will Roberts on the helm and me as crew we whizzed round the course on Saturday's race, the conditions were excellent for this speedy little gaffer and it was great to get out on the water again.

As much as I love my family's smacks dinghy, she can be a little lethargic at times and it was awesome fun so sail this twitchy little boat in conditions to which she seemed very well suited. I would definitely recommend taking one out!

However, regardless of vessel type, little has changed of those charming muddy creeks over the decades, and they still hold a very special charm for me, and many others who are lucky enough to sail there.

Words: Maddy Masters

Visit the Eastcoaster website for race results, video and more photos from the most successful weekend.

www.eastcoastgaffers.org.uk



Will and Maddy race one of the EC Gaffings Photo: Mary Gibbs

Southwold Rally: 28 - 30 June

Tony and Shirley Judd, long-standing OGA members, arrived at the Southwold Rally in their campervan with push bikes to enjoy an event they'd never attended before in all their years of membership.

Shirley and I have been East Coast OGA members for 38 years, but were never able to attend a Southwold Rally. Now in our mid 70s, Covid lockdowns showed us we no longer needed to own a boat. This was reinforced in part by the distance to our mooring off the Colne; 189 road miles, the Molliette bearing 118 degrees, 108nM, from home. We acquired a VW Transporter campervan, plot size equal to a long car. We'd already learned a camping trip was enhanced with long walks and push bikes. We realised Southwold was now within our grasp free from tides, adverse winds, boat maintenance schedules and business commitments.

2024 promised to be special: Southwold holds an Arts Festival each year, coinciding with the 75th birthday celebrations for Southwold Sailing Club. SSC made all the Gaffers so welcome and put on such a good show. We spent Friday exploring Southwold, an absolutely delightful town, although Adnams Brewery and their colossal merchandise array is everywhere. This doesn't spoil the place but considering that Rick Stein's grip on Padstow has given rise to the term 'Padstein', we did wonder if Southwold might have collected the name 'Adwold' or 'Southnams'. We pitched in the town campsite conveniently placed close to the Harbour entrance with all necessary facilities available. In the evening we attended the SSC Bar and enjoyed an excellent BBQ, catching up with some old friends and faces. A folk band entertained us and Pete 'The Knife' also entertained us with a pithy OGA song written way back.

On Saturday we were charged with documenting the day's events and used our bikes to explore. First stop the delightful Walberswick then the tracks that lead up to The White Hart, Blythburgh. The open boats were to sail up to the pub for lunch. That entailed rowing or sculling under the rather low Bailey bridge, before setting up mast and rig. We photographed this and then cycled ahead, mostly via road as the tracks were so overgrown, to arrive in time to photograph their arrival.





The river was somewhat short of water by the time they arrived as a fair south easterly and good tide had propelled them almost as fast as we could cycle! The day was warm and glorious.

For Saturday night a very professional stage had been erected between the Harbour and the Club. A good line-up of bands played from early evening. This culminated in a very good band called the Informers, playing some Madness hits and other similar fare. Although never introduced, there on the electric piano and singing was Rogue Trader TV presenter Matt Allwright. Not a member of the band, he's always been a musician and I can say that his sense of rhythm was spot on. His piano playing, whilst unadventurous, was deftly executed. Matt hails from Berkshire, so whether there is a Southwold connection, we did not discover. We watched this with some new found friends: the much larger motorhome next to us at the campsite contained the very friendly David and Ann. David had been the longest serving governor of the Royal Hospital School at Holbrook on the River Stour. It turned out that they live just 25 miles east of us in Banbury, Oxon. We all did our best to finish the 20 odd barrels of beer available which was well served and very drinkable!

Sunday dawned grey and cool, with several drenching soft showers in the morning. There was a steady, full sail breeze off the land, north westerly, and those with topsails set them for the race in Walberswick Bay. The cloud base lifted as the Race started and occasional gleams of sunshine signalled the end of rain. The prizegiving with Race results was brought forward to 2.30pm and apart from cups there was a number of engraved half pint glasses distributed to winners from the Jon Wainwright collection of Southwold Rally events from previous years. These were very kindly and thoughtfully donated by Jon's widow Margaret.

What is it like to attend an OGA rally without a boat? Well, I confess to a little envy when I saw the Fabian Bush built stout winklebrig 'Faith' arrive and later sail out to race. I also noted that for those coming from south, the wind was aft, off the land and would be ditto going home. However, push bikes set you free and the event was just as enjoyable and people just as friendly. We look forward to attending this and other OGA events in the future.

*The moral of the tale? When you hang up your sailing boots, don't forget all your other shoes.
Words & photos: Tony Judd*

Three Rivers Race, June 2024

Having first done the 3RR in 2019 as crew on a friend's boat, Daniel Stoker completed this challenging race in 'Catsnip', his diminutive catboat in 2023. Here is his report from the 2024.

Success on our first attempt with 'Catsnip' and just the general sense of achievement and adventure meant that we would have to come back for the June 2024 edition. With different tides and a very windy forecast, northerly F5 and gusting even more with the expectation of an all night race, we needed new strategies. There was Plan A, B, C and even D.

Starting off reefed and with twice as many in our class as 2023, off we went again. This time we ignored the legs and headed straight for the lower Bure mark, making good time despite a rather epic wipeout following a gybe that pinned us in the reeds for a short while. Progress north was a bit more of a challenge. Short tacking a reefed Catboat in 30kt gusts on a river that is less than 40ft wide in many places is not easy. The focus was more on making enough way across the river to get through the next tack than it was to try and sail as close as possible to the wind with the risk getting caught in irons. There were a few tricky moments when faster and larger overtaking boats failed to account for our limited ability to manoeuvre in the narrow stretches. This cost us time as we were forced to take avoiding action, sometimes resulting in visits for both boats to the reeds.

We continued north, helped by the tide and made it to Potter Heigham in the early evening, knowing that we'd fit under the bridge this time. We sailed and paddled through the bridges to Hickling Broad. This resembled more of a raging sea than an inland broad.

After rounding the mark, a forecast of wind through the night and just two legs to do, excitement was high. We were maybe 3-4 hours ahead of our 2023 race but the 3RR wasn't done with us yet. Despite the forecast the wind changed its mind and fizzled out just as we made our way down to South Walsham.

It then left us on the edge of despair as we endured a three hours up and 10 minutes back leg on the River Ant to the final mark. With the prospect of an early return dashed and real threat of not even finishing, we were grateful that when dawn turned to day the wind picked up just enough. We began to make progress on the final stretch to the finish, crossing the line amid cheers fro, everyone at Horning Sailing Club in 21 hours 53 minutes, 20 minutes ahead of our previous time.

It turns out only one other made it back after us. With all the wind on Saturday over half the 120 starters had already retired. For 'Catsnip', it was another 3RR in the bag and another adventure for her weary crew. Time for that breakfast.

Words & photos: Daniel Stoker

Find more from Daniel about the Three Rivers Race (3RR) on the Eastcoaster website: www.eastcoastgaffers.org.uk



Website, Social Media, Print & email

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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.

The Association website was updated in January 2024 to provide 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 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 (black only). 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



Gaffers gather for the Gaffling Championships at The Rocks on the River Deben, May, 2024

*above: Dean Stepney
below: Steve Mitchell*

