

OGA

EAST COAST GAFFERS

EASTCOASTER

Newsletter of the East Coast OGA



Swallows and Amazons, 3 - 4 June, 2023 Photo: Ian Clarke

This third 'digest' of EASTCOASTER arrives at the start of the OGA60 Jubilee Party on the River Orwell with the East Coast Gaffers as hosts to welcome back the Round Britain Cruise fleet with a party for 100 boats.

Now the EASTCOASTER blog has been running for a while along with the email updates, I do hope those of you with Internet access are enjoying them. Do drop me a line with your feedback.

I look forward to receiving reports and photos from the OGA60 Jubilee Party and Cruise for inclusion online and in the next issue of this 'Digest'. In September, there is a small boat rally to look forward to and, further afield, the Arnside Conference in November.

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Summer & Autumn events

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

Deben YC/OGA Classic and Spirit of Tradition series

www.eastcoastgaffers.org.uk/dyc-classic-race-series-2023/

Sunday 20 August Start 12:55 – Deben YC Regatta

Sunday 15 October Start 11:10

23 - 24 September: Dinghies at Slaughden SC

Watch out for more details and booking information!

Crossfields of Arnside Conference: Saturday 18 Nov, 2023

EC Gaffers are warmly invited to the third Conference on Crossfields of Arnside Boatbuilders, leading builders of Morecambe Bay Prawners, yachts and dinghies. Speakers include Mike Beckett, EC member and skipper of 'Bonita', built by Crossfields in 1888 and taking part in the OGA60 Round Britain Cruise, 2023.

Visit 'Friends of Crossfield 1912 Yacht 'Severn' for information and booking forms:

www.ticketsource.co.uk/friends-of-crossfield-1912-yacht-severn/crossfields-conference/e-xagkoe



Swallows & Amazons 2023 Photo: Ian Clarke

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eastcoaster@oga.org.uk

Cherubs race on Coronation Day

We had a fantastic day of racing with the Deben Cherubs to mark the Coronation and to open the 2023 classics racing season. A little drizzle did nothing to dampen spirits and a fairly steady 10 knots of breeze made for close racing.

Four Cherubs were racing, CC2 'Cherub', CC6 'Lindy Lou', CC14 'Jubilee' (sailing under CC17) and CC18 'Lynette'. Unfortunately 'Lindy Lou' had some pre-race rigging issues forcing her to retire before she even got going but with a tow-assist she was able to re-join the fleet later in the race to still enjoy some sailing. The other three pocket cruisers enjoyed very close racing with a beat against the tide to a turning mark near Methersgate Quay followed by a quick run home. All three changed positions regularly and the race could have been anybody's. 'Jubilee' was first to the windward mark and it looked like the race was done but with a slight mistake from 'Jubilee' the race re-opened and 'Cherub' managed to edge past. The race was won by only 7 seconds and 'Lynette' was only just behind the first two.

Some excellent racing was followed by a BBQ (with a TV showing the coronation procession) back at the yard joined by some of the Deben Yacht Club's more modern dinghy fleet racers. The next race will be on the 18th of June to coincide with the Woodbridge Regatta. All classics and traditionally rigged boats welcome to race, not just Cherubs!

Photos & words: Matt Lis, Woodbridge Boatyard, 7 May, 2023



EC OGA featured boats

An East Coast boat is featured each month on the East Coast Gaffers Facebook page and EASTCOASTER blog. If you can, take a look at the additional tales and pictures online. In May we featured one of the youngest boats in the Round Britain Cruise fleet, 'Lahloo' followed in June by 'Cygnet of London' and 'Onward of Ito' in July. Do contact the Editor if you have a nomination for a boat to be featured later this year.

'Lahloo': Cornish Crabber 26

Our featured boat for May is much newer than earlier ones, being only 11 years old! Your Editor is keen to prove the 'old' Gaffers don't have to be that old (the members or the boats, of course). 'Lahloo' is barely a teenager but an active member of the East Coast OGA fleet, she'll be taking part in the OGA60 Round Britain Cruise leaving Ramsgate this weekend, 1 May, 2023. 'Lahloo' is a Cornish Crabber 26, now owned by Richard Bailey. Built in Rock, Cornwall in 2012 she is out of the David Thomas stable and is a sea kindly, well thought through gaff cutter, combining tradition with modern comfort and efficiency. Her skipper, Richard thinks he probably caught the gaff bug at a very early age. His grandfather owned the much older gaffer, 'Tasma', OGA no. 365, an 1897 smack yacht. He grew up with a 10' clinker gunter rigged dinghy, before racing dinghies and eventually sailing an S&S Tartan Ten which he raced offshore around the East Coast.

East Coast boats taking part in the OGA60 Round Britain Cruise

'Barbarossa', built 1976, 49' gaff ketch, home port Benfleet
 'Bonita', built 1888, 35' gaff yawl, home port Harty Ferry
 'Cygnet of London', built 1906, 40' gaff yawl, home port Fambridge
 'Lahloo', built 2012, 26' gaff cutter, home port West Mersea
 'Onward of Ito', built 1923, gaff cutter, home port Greenwich



'Lahloo' by Sandy Miller



'Cygnet of London', East Coast Race, 2018 Photo: Sandy Miller

'Cygnet of London'

'Cygnet of London', a beautiful gaff rigged yawl, built in 1906 by the Burgoyne brothers of Kingston on Thames, famed for their Thames A Raters and Royal Barges. She's built to a design by her first owner Mr. G. Chalmers. She was converted to Bermudan cutter rig at some time in her history, but converted back to her original rig in 2006. She draws just 4ft 3in with her centreboard up and her draft increases to 7ft when down.

Her spars are Douglas fir and Sitka spruce. She's planked with Burma teak on oak frames, all bronze fastened with an elm hog

'Cygnet of London' took part in the OGA50 Round Britain Challenge, 2013 and Dutch Anniversary Cross Country Tour, 2014. In 2006, her centenary year, she won the Jubilee Trophy, Gaffers Division 1 in the Round the Island Race (Isle of Wight) with skipper Kim Hartley. She's taking part in the OGA60 Round Britain Cruise in 2023.



'Cygnet of London', 2015 Photo: Tony Pickering

‘Onward of Ito’

Our featured boat for July, ‘Onward of Ito’ is another centenarian, also taking part in the OGA60 Round Britain Cruise. Built in 1923 by W Mollett of Southampton she was purchased in 2019 by Martin Goodrich when he sold ‘Gwenili’. Both Martin and ‘Gwenili’ are well-known members of the East Coast Gaffers.

‘Onward of Ito’ is a gaff cutter, 25’ built as an inshore fishing boat on Itchen Ferry lines, commissioned by Alfred Parker, landlord of the Marsh Tavern. Her unusual name is due to the fact that his nickname was ITO. Converted to a yacht following her fishing career, she underwent a big restoration by Traditional Sail in 2000.



‘Onward of Ito’



Bristol Channel pilot cutter, ‘Letty’ and ‘Onward of Ito’ preparing to race in Oban, 2023 Photo: Julian Cable

OGA60 Round Britain Cruise: an update from ‘Sailing By.’

After leaving Ramsgate on 1 May, the fleet sailed to Cowes where more OGA boats joined in. Here is a summary, based on the posts in ‘Sailing by’. Visit the website for more if you have Internet access.

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

There was an excellent party weekend in Ramsgate, including a sail up to Sandwich, organised by OGA stalwarts Robert and Jan Holden. The six East Coast boats taking part in the RBC arrived in Ramsgate to be joined by several others by motorboat, campervan and car, including ‘Recipe’ a Norfolk Smuggler 25 and ‘Hilda’ an ex-lifeboat both from the Netherlands.

The tides enforced a rather early start at 0400 on Monday 1 May, so there are no photos of the 'grand depart'. The RBC60 fleet made passage south to arrive in Cowes for a welcome from the Solent Gaffers when another group of participating boats joined them. On Saturday 13 May skippers took advantage of the weekend 'weather window' and made good progress westwards. In Plymouth, they had an excellent welcome from the South West Gaffers and more boats joined the fleet. They then sailed on to the Bristol Channel Gaffers party at Neyland, Milford Haven.

The fleet then split, with a small group choosing to sail up the Welsh Coast and others crossing to Dublin Bay for another excellent party, hosted by Dublin Bay OGA. Their next 'Party Port', ably organised by Alison and Julian Cable who are now living in Scotland, was at Oban. Once again, the RBC60 fleet of 15 vessels chose different routes with four going 'over the top' (including East Coast Gaffers 'Cygnet of London' and 'Onward of Ito') whilst the others made transit through the Caledonian Canal. One long-distance participant in the Oban event was 'Titch', towed up from Suffolk by Jo and Paul Masters to join the fleet along the Canal. The last two 'Party Ports' as the fleet heads down the east coast of Scotland and England are in Dundee and Blyth.



'Bonita' and 'Barbarossa' in Oban Photo: Beverley Yates



'Robinetta', 'Titch' and 'Lahloo' in Oban Photo: Beverley Yates

Introducing our OGA60 sponsors: Dartmouth Distillery Co.

Dartmouth Distillery Co. are sponsors to the OGA60 Jubilee Party on the East Coast in August, 2023. Read on for some background about the company and their products.

As a member of the OGA and the owner of a Cockwell's Bristol Pilot Cutter, 'Merlin of Falmouth', Lance Whitehead was delighted to be invited to support the OGA60 Diamond Jubilee Celebrations during which a pop-up bar will be set-up and other bars in the Suffolk Yacht Harbour area have offered to serve the gin too, so everyone should have the chance to sample the gin.



WHEN AT SEA ONLY ONE GIN WILL DO

Race prizes of Dartmouth English Gin, Dartmouth Navy Strength Gin and Calancombe Estate Cassis and wines will be awarded to each class in the OGA East Coast Race.

Dartmouth English Gin and Dartmouth Navy Strength are celebrated for their complexity and incredible smoothness. Each has a special charisma, that has won them a passionate following, and they have been recognised with a range of top national and international awards.





*Cockwell's Bristol Pilot Cutter,
'Merlin of Falmouth'*

With long seafaring ancestry and close family connections to Dartmouth, it is no surprise that Lance and Caroline Whitehead opted for 'Dartmouth Distillery Co' as their brand in 2018, when they launched their classic London Dry Gin from their family vineyard and orchard, Calancombe Estate, not far from Dartmouth.

Caroline's family were shipbuilders on the Dart and in Brixham, launching and operating brig schooners and Brixham trawlers throughout the 1800s and into the 1920s.

Until the Second World War, Lance's grandfather was captain of the 'Devonshire' a Bibby Line ship based in Dartmouth from where diplomats, civil servants and soldiers would travel to ports across the Mediterranean and as far as India.

Dartmouth Distillery Co. has been an enthusiastic supporter of various marine charities, including The Seahorse Trust, the RNLI, Dart Sailability, and The Marine Conservation Society.

In addition, they are always keen to support classic boating events. To date, The Falmouth Classic Regatta, The British Classic Regatta and the Uffa Fox 50th Celebration in Cowes and a close relationship has developed with Chelsea Publishing's Classic Boat and Sailing Today/Yachts and Yachting resulting in Dartmouth English Gin being awarded as prizes at the 2023 Classic Boat Awards and the 2022 British Yachting Awards held at the Royal Thames Yacht Club in London.

Tollesbury Rally: 20 - 21 May, 2023

This year's event was a bit blustery, but everyone enjoyed an excellent weekend at Tollesbury Sailing Club.

Yet again we were blessed with blue skies and sunshine, but in comparison to last year a very strong breeze as well. Tollesbury Sailing Club claim to be one of the friendliest clubs on the East Coast and I'm sure this is correct, we had a lovely time! Joe Farrow managed to get his Landrover and dinghy down early enough from Norfolk to get out for an exploratory sail on Friday and during the day several other members arrived to set up camp and bask in the sunshine.

Due to the conditions, a revised course was set further into the Leavings, with two laps. With the wind blowing 17 – 24 mph Yvonne Mitchell decided, very wisely, not to launch her scow 'Ermintrude' and following a reefed sail round part of the course I too scratched in 'Pudding Faces'. Melvyn Fox sailed 'Molly' around the course but did not race. Last years winner, [Steve Johnson](#) could not start due to a failed main halyard, which could not be repaired and Pete 'the Knife' (PTK) almost had to withdraw as 'Papa Stour' was leaking through the centreboard bolt. Bing, the Tollesbury Sailing Club commodore was delayed at the start trying to reef his boat 'Fidget' but otherwise all got away. Phil Plumtree, in his 14' West Mersea lugger 'Woodcock' dominated the race from the start, with Joe Farrow in his wooden lugger 'Sine Nomine', PTK, Pete Thomas in 'Eureka', Tarquin and Henry Wildridge in 'Ettie' and Bing in 'Fidget' following in his wake. Phil won by some distance but it was noticeable throughout the race how Bing managed to catch up and overtake all but Phil. The event was concluded with a superb fish and chips supper. Yet another superb weekend of sailing at Tollesbury, with a lovely set of photographs by Sandy Miller to remind us of the event.

Photos: Sandy Miller

Words: Ian Clarke, East Coast OGA, event organiser

Visit the blog for full reports:
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Swallows and Amazons: 3 - 4 June, 2023

We bring another 'small boat' report, this time from the pen of Ed Roberts.

On a fine Friday afternoon, reminiscent of the idyllic days of Swallows and Amazons, the fleet gathered at Walton and Frinton Yacht Club. The arrival of most boats was impeded by the unfortunate closure of the main road to Walton, causing a tumultuous diversion attracting almost the entire population of the Tendring peninsula. There were a few reports of success for stepping off the beaten track and ignoring signs. The fleet congregated in a borrowed camping field, graciously provided by the Wilberforce family.

Amongst the tall grass, campervans and tents found designated spots. Sailors, huddled behind a windbreak, eagerly exchanged tales and news from across the region. It was a merry gathering around a flickering campfire accompanied by clinking glasses and jovial laughter, until sleep beckoned with thoughts of gusty winds and early morning briefings. Saturday morning dawned, as if adhering to its own mischievous agenda, bringing forth the anticipated strong winds and an unusually early briefing. Sailors gathered to be informed of the day's course and adjusted start time of 1100, allowing ample opportunity for copious amounts of coffee and bacon rolls. A special mention must be made of a valiant boat that sailed from Titchmarsh to arrive just after the briefing. It was agreed to forsake the course round Horsey Island, replacing it with two laps heading out to a turning mark off Stone Point, back past Walton and Titchmarsh into the centre of the Wade to finish on the Club line.

Whilst some boats were towed to the start line, there was a captivating spectacle of synchronized sails whipping along a fetch towards Stone Point. Despite the blustery gusts that tested their mettle, the fleet managed to maintain a tightly knit formation. Curiously, even the leading boat, entrusted with charting the course and briefing fellow sailors, experienced a fleeting moment of panic until they realized the channel marker adorned with number 13 was indeed the no.13 race mark on the chartlet kindly provided by Dez. Once the mark was rounded, competitors surged forward along a reach and a run, propelled by the winds, back to the Wade. This leg favoured the full-sailed smacks boats and their crews, who deftly exploited their additional canvas.



As the race neared its conclusion, the course was shortened, much to the delight of those windswept sailors labouring tirelessly.

The final leg beckoned, culminating in a triumphant finish beneath the tower of the W&FYC line. The beat to the corner afforded an opportunity for those wise enough to have taken a reef to outmanoeuvre the intrepid early leaders who valiantly, but perhaps too boldly, clung to their full sails.



Fortunately for the damp sailors, the sun was out whilst the boats were derigged and everyone headed to the bar to dry off and whet their whistles. Prizegiving took place on the first floor of W&FYC's clubhouse, with recognition given to both little gaffers (the Scow raced by Ginny) and young gaffers (Elliot crewing on the Yachting World Day Boat), before awarding the chocolates.

Dinner was kindly put on by W&FYC, coordinated by Yvonne, allowing the sailors to continue regaling their tales from the race. After supper, everyone enjoyed live music in the Clubhouse bar. Most took early leave to bed on Saturday night, with the windy race and plenty of sun having caught up with them. On Sunday, several boats made the trip out to Stone Point, again battling windy weather and were rewarded with a prime viewing spot to enjoy watching those crossing the bar in both directions. After consuming rations, the boats headed back to the club to derig, load up, and head home. A fantastic, sunny, windy weekend was had by all.

Results

'Suffling' [Gaffling] 1st overall
 'Dabchick' [Coot] 1st Traditional
 'Papa Stour' [Smacks Boat] 1st smacks boat
 'Minnow' [Smacks Boat] 2nd smacks boat
 'HappyDays' [Smacks Boat]
 'Muddy Duck' [Scow] Little Gaffer
 'Edith G' [YW Day Boat] Youngest Crew
 'Eureka' [Smacks Boat]
 'Ettie' [Smacks Boat]
 'Sine Nomine' [Smacks Boat]

Words: Ed Roberts

Photos: Ian Clarke



Deben Gaffers at the SYH Classic Regatta

Seven Gaffers made passage out of the River Deben, crossing the bar by the newly charted route through the surf on a rather blustery Friday, 8 June, 2023. Four Deben Cherubs left Woodbridge Boatyard and three boats departed the Tidemill Yacht Harbour in company: 'Tannhauser', classic Bermudan built 1963, 'Cachalot', your Editor's 'gentleman's yacht' celebrating her 125th birthday and 'Dolce Vita XI', our 'mothership'.

At 05:10 with the sun just peaking over the Tidemill, four intrepid Deben Cherubs, 'Cherub', 'Lindy Lou', 'Lynette' and 'Jubilee' set off from our jetty in search of the River Orwell, Levington and Suffolk Yacht Harbour. The sail down the Deben was spectacular with breeze and tide building as they went, the crossing of the Deben Bar took concentration as ever but went without incident and then a rather blustery and bumpy sail down the coast brought everybody safely to the Orwell in record time. The Cherubs are moored up in pride of place in Suffolk Yacht Harbour ready for the Classics Regatta, bunting and battle flags are aloft and the sailors are left to prepare their boats further or have a nap!

It only seems right to share some photos to celebrate the champagne conditions, and stunning classic boats! The regatta was a lot of fun and a wonderful showcase for a hugely diverse collection of boats with a fleet spanning the 21ft gaff-rigged Cherubs through to the new 72ft Spirit Yacht 'Gwenhyfar II' via a Vertue, a 6 Metre, Stellas, an International One Design, several other Spirits and Holman designs . . . without listing all the Faireys and other power and motorboats! The oldest boat racing was the smack 'Primrose', owned by Ash Faire-Ring with two of our team crewing and bringing home line honours several times.

Words: Woodbridge Boatyard on Facebook

Photos on the next page are both by Toby Essex Productions.

Top: 'Cachalot'

Bottom: 'Primrose'



Photo: Beverley Yates



'Tannhauser' Photo: Beverley Yates



Photo: Woodbridge Boatyard



Photo: Beverley Yates



Blog, Facebook, print and email options

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

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

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Let's hope the weather is as good as 2015 for our OGA60 Jubilee Party, 2023!