



Forestay

After all the song and dance I made about the need to get as many members as possible receiving Eastcoaster on the internet, some of you may be wondering why you have received a hard copy this time.

Well, it's not that your committee wishes to prop up the Post Office's ailing finances, it's to ensure that everyone gets a hard copy of this year's East Coast programme. We hope you will place it in a prominent position in the household and will organise your family life around it (diplomatically, please), ensuring that we have a good turnout for all our events.

This might be a good opportunity to remind members to send in entry forms for events in good time – at least a week before the event. While no one is ever turned away from an event because they haven't sent in an entry form – we need the money – it helps your hard working organisers no end if they know ahead of time who's coming. And to concentrate the mind, your committee has decided to levy a late entry fee of £5 on entries received on the day. End of sermon.



Charm, winner of the Felgate points series

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It'll soon be summer

Boat Register

Last November I had a call from Classic Boat Magazine asking for details of the boats shown in a photo of the Maldon Regatta, as they wanted to run a short feature on the event. Specifically, they wanted to know the identity of the old gaffer in front of Hardy and I was able to say that the boat in question was the 25ft Deidre, designed by TD Jacobs (who?) and built by Alexander Gostelow in 1934; and where did I find this info? In my copy of the 1993 OGA Boat Archive. The publication of this invaluable reference almost broke the OGA, so it was never updated or repeated, but I have often thought that it could be produced today at a fraction of the cost and readily kept up to date, by doing it online. Well, I'm pleased to report that it's happening at last; the East Coast area is going it alone, with the recently launched online Boat Register. Those of you who have internet access can go onto our website www.eastcoastclassics.co.uk, click on 'Boat Register' in the left hand contents column, follow the link and be transported to a Boat Register. To transfer onto the web the immense amount of data we have would be an impossible task for one person, so this Boat Register will have to grow from the bottom up, by input from individual boat owners.

Hence the success of this new Boat Register depends entirely on you, the members; it is up to you to put the details of your boat into the



Boat Register. Most of the boats in our area are unique in one way or another and a well-populated Register will make for very interesting browsing, as well as a valuable reference, but it will be of limited use if only a minority of members takes part.

The procedure is very simple and was described in detail by Steve in the Nov 09 issue of Eastcoaster.



Deva, and above, Nancy Blackett. Two historic boats, typical of the craft we would like to see in the Boat Register

Reports of Events

Area AGM

After the hectic sailing season with its varied events (and weather), the autumn can seem very quiet as old gaffers – boats and skippers – prepare for laying up, so it's always pleasant to meet up with old friends again in November at the area AGM, and swap tales of the last season. There's business to be conducted, of course (see summary below) but that never seems to take long; nothing contentious to argue about and there's never a shortage of volunteers for the committee. [So we must be doing something right – Ed.]

Then there was prize giving, followed by a raffle and auction to raise funds for the area. Spurred on by auctioneer Brian Hammett, Roy Hart put in the winning bid for a superb, but very large, boathook donated by Barry Edwards, but the climax of the evening was the auction of a new state-of-the-art chartplotter, donated by Sue Lewis and Howard Wheelton with the proceeds being shared by the East Coast and Dutch areas. After some brisk bidding, it went for £350 to Trevor Rawlinson.

Following the serious stuff, Butterman's laid on a sit-down supper and then there was music by 'Fourplay'.

Summary of the Minutes of the AGM of the EC Area OGA

Held on the 14th November, 2009, in the Butterman's, Woolverstone Marina.

Chaired by Peter Thomas. 45 Members signed the board. 12 Apologies for absence.

1. President's Address

Peter welcomed everyone to our 46th area AGM, especially the two boats that got there despite the weather. It had been another good year for the area, and we held 8 events afloat and 3 ashore. In the main East Coast Race at Brightlingsea, 54 boats signed up; Peter thanked Richard Giles and his



Pete Thomas

team for all their work on this event.

The Southwold Rally this year was particularly good thanks to Lorna Hill who did so much to make the event special.

This year our August Classic Cruise programme was cut

to pieces by poor weather and there was much re-scheduling. Pin Mill SC made us especially welcome and put their clubhouse at our disposal; they would really like to see us back next year and, in 2010, Peter would like to see the Gaffers give the PMSC a real spectacle. The year after that we could plan to support a different club at their regatta.

At last year's AGM, members were asked about receiving Eastcoaster by email. That system is now up and running and hopefully more and more members will opt to receive their Eastcoaster this way as it helps the area's funds significantly.

Almost ten years ago the idea of a National online Boat Register (BR) was first mooted. To date there is little to show for it nationally, but our own area BR is now up and running. What we would like now is for members to put their boat's details and boat history onto the register. Steve Daley-Yates, who has done a tremendous amount of work on the register, later demonstrated to members how they can access it and register their own boat.

Peter said that our committee have all worked incredibly hard throughout the year and he thanked them all for all their help and support in making the events run so smoothly; without their help the East Coast area would not be so strong.

2. Minutes of Last Meeting

Approved; proposed as true by Wendy Wetherill, seconded by Paul Williams. Brian pleaded for shorter minutes.

3. Secretary's Report

Pete Elliston kicked off with those immortal words: "Strewth, is it that time of year already?!" He praised the tremendous colour magazine that Eastcoaster has now become by



PTK

being on the website. Well done Bernard, Steve and all who produced it and moved it to this new level.

What a season we had. There were eight main events including an Easter Rally at which there was a three-day Shanty event dovetailed into the Shipwreck bar at Shotley along with a sell-out dinner for the Gaffers; a re-created Southwold which had so many options for entertainment and

pursuits on the Sunday – well done, Lorna and her team; a 10th anniversary Swallows and Amazons which saw 36 small boats turn out for a shortened course, a good race and a great time, only marred by the very wet Sunday's recovery of boats to round off with – our thanks to the Walton and Frinton Club; an August cruise which was notable for the appalling weather, changes to the programme and the record number of boats who signed up to it – 46! Well done to you all. Pete said he had had some useful encounters with the Dutch on a trip to Holland, where they met up the Dutch YOGA (Young Old Gaffers) and got a great letter from them for inclusion in our Gaffers Log next year, which challenges our Young Old Gaffers.

Last year Pete had used the “boat days” (BDs, number of boats attending X number of days) simile to quantify the events organised, which seems to be a useful way of accounting for our activities. 2007 saw 463 BDs (all inc. Maldon) of which 250 were on the August Cruise; 2008 saw 568 BDs, of which 370 were the August Cruise; 2009 saw 688 BDs, of which 460 were August Cruise. So we are really getting in a serious amount of eventing. Well done to all who turn up and sail. Mike McCarthy last year took on the task of promoting the pointy rig and is making progress. The membership packs contain the leaflet explaining the Bermudan criteria for joining the Gaffers.

This year we committed ourselves to covering Phil Wetherill's insurance for his RIB and set up a better system of covering his expenses of trailing the boat to and from our events. Phil does an immense amount of work for the Gaffers, acting as rescue, ferry and press boat.

Membership

Some figures from the membership sec's report to the central GMC show that in Nov.09 the East Coast had 351 members and Solent 364; combined we represent 61% of total membership of 1,165, which is down 114 compared with '08. The EC represents 30% of total membership, which is up on last year from 27%, so we seem to be growing as the total becomes smaller. Putting this with our increase in boat days rather makes us an interesting phenomenon. The third largest area by number is Devon with 93. We have now developed a very comprehensive membership pack; some of these were available at the AGM. They are also carried by event organisers.

Members will be interested to hear that the late Jon Wainwright's boats Deva and Reynardine have

both been sold, with Deva being kept locally on the Crouch. To quote the famous sailor and author, “Fleet disbursement has completed its final task”. So ends an era. There are only so many tides!!

4. Treasurer's Report

Clare produced her usual excellent sheets showing an income of £13,872.89. Not many changes except that at Southwold our income was up considerably. Income from Merchandise was also well up this year. The expenditure of £13,678.84 again followed roughly the same pattern as last year, but spending on the website was up – largely due to £500 invested into the first phase of the online Boat Register. Our largest expense, other than running events, is still the publication and mailing of Eastcoaster, but hopefully next year we will see a saving as more members opt to read Eastcoaster online. Luckily all the sailing events made a clear profit; however, of nearly £14,000 income, only £1,100 came from Central OGA funds. There is £2,973.19 in our current account and £1,128.41 in the deposit account, which has remained untouched this year, providing a reasonable buffer against future disasters. Clare thanked Peter Maynard for reviewing and signing off the accounts.

5. Election of Main Committee

All were willing to stand again and were re-elected en bloc.

6. Awards

Francis B Cooke Trophy, for the best log, went to Roy Hart for his trip to the Scillies. There were no entrants for the Avola Trophy. The Needham Trophy, for best gaffer over 100 years old in the points series, went to Peter Thomas and Transcur. In the overall gaffers points series the winner was Robert Hill and Charm, 2nd Martin Goodrich in Gweneli and 3rd Peter with Transcur. In the Bermudan points, the winner was Steve Meakin with Flamingo, then Barry Edwards with Random; the first four boats had each been one point apart! The Bateman Trophy for the person who had done the most during the year for the EC-OGA went to a very surprised Lorna Hill, who this year has done a huge amount for us in many different ways: getting stuck in to cook for members at BBQs, reviving one of our most enjoyable rallies, Southwold, and organising a most memorable trip on the paddle steamer Waverley.

7. National AGM

Brian will be standing down as National President and his proposed successor is Mike Shaw of the

Solent Area. Also, Peter Lyons is standing down as membership sec. and it is proposed that he hands over to Peter Crook. Keith Osborn is standing down as editor of the Log, and a replacement is being sought.

The national Boat Database is to be launched shortly and it is hoped that 'ordinary' members will ask some pertinent questions from the floor at the national AGM, about the database and boat register. We have sorted ours, at our own expense, but Central hasn't. Pat Dawson may be taking over the central boat database from Nick Miller. It would help us a lot if we got more Central funding for our boat register. Peter urged our EC members to add their boats to our register - the more the better. Peter hoped for the support of our area to take it forward to the AGM to gee them up. We are encouraging other areas to look at the East Coast boat register. A voice from the floor (Rik Graham) thought ours was brilliant!

8. AOB

Rob Williamson has agreed to be the EC archivist. This is a daunting task as there is an immense amount of material to sift through.

The idea of an area calendar was mooted and Beverly had done a pilot run of a few copies, with nice EC pics. It was felt that this idea should be developed and an area photo competition is to be held to get the necessary material.

Pete Elliston suggested liaising with Shoreline about their shore management plans; he is on their committee.

The 2011 London Boat Show will have an area set aside for various associations to make their pitch and Pete would like to hear from anyone willing to help if we (National, that is) were to have a stand.

Pete also proposed that next year we put forward some of our members for National trophies, e.g. for seamanship.

The meeting closed soon after 19.30 hrs.

Graham Wadson
Minute Secretary

Association AGM

East Coast area president Peter Thomas attended the meeting of area presidents and secretaries, and the Association AGM, in London on Jan 16th. He reports that some new faces will be seen in the higher echelons of the Association; President Brian Hammett stood down at the end of his (extended) term and was replaced by Mike Shaw as the new president and it is likely that changes in the Association's management structure, initiated by Brian, will follow. There was a feeling that the General Management Committee had become too unwieldy and distant from the areas and should revert to a more compact and agile form, using modern communication techniques to tighten up the day-to-day management operation. Progress has already been made with the completion of the management database which will be of immense benefit to the new membership secretary and the next task is to launch an online boat register under a newly appointed register editor.

The treasurer reported that the association's finances were sound, but funds would need to be committed to develop the boat register, possibly building on the East Coast model.

A more detailed report of the AGM proceedings will appear in the next Gaffers Log.

2010 Calendar of Events

So, having reported on the business bits, now let's tell you what's in store for the season. You should find this year's programme of events in this issue; it seems to get more comprehensive each year, with events catering for all tastes, from a simple meet for a barbecue or seafood lunch, through cruising in company, to out-and-out racing. Included in the programme are events for classics or gaffers, organised by other clubs, which are well worth supporting. But, as a summary, I'll concentrate on the events organised by your committee, up to mid-season.

First off is a new social event: a visit to the Nottage Institute in Wivenhoe on Friday Feb 26th. We are promised a speaker and a tour of the Institute, and we will see examples of traditional dinghies under construction. This starts at 7.30pm, but gaffers and friends are invited for warm-up drinks at Steve Meakin's pad - 5, Smuggler's Wharf on Wivenhoe quay, just along from the Nottage - from 6.30pm. (Don't bring a bottle).

On Sat 6th March our Annual Dinner will be held once more at the Royal Burnham YC. This will be an splendid occasion: four course meal, waitress service, after-dinner speaker, jackets and ties for the gents and posh frocks for the ladies. Make your choice from the menu shown on the attached 'entry form' and send off your cheque pronto to Clare Thomas at:
Green Farm Barn, Barham Green, Ipswich, Suffolk IP6 0QF.

You can make a weekend of it and stay overnight at the RBYC or locally; details from Trevor Rawlinson.

Just a few days later, on March 10th, Mike Robertson is organising another sail clinic at Jimmy Lawrence's loft in Brightlingsea, starting at 7.30. Bring along a damaged or badly setting sail and you may get it repaired or re-cut free of charge! Call Mike on 01473 327 115 if you're coming.

A month later, with the varnish hardly dry, it's the Easter Egg rally at Shotley on April 3rd-4th. Organiser Mel Fox has promised a packed weekend with a dinghy raid to the New Bell in Harwich on the Saturday, followed by the fitting-out supper in the evening at the Shipwreck bar in Shotley marina. Plus there's a shanty festival going on all weekend. See the attached poster for details. And don't worry if the varnish is still in the tin, come to the supper by car and help launch the season in style. Tel Julia Raper on 07766466431 to reserve your supper.

Another month goes by and I'm sure you'll all be in the water and ready for the two Crouch rallies in May. The May Day rally on 1st-3rd May should be a gentle affair; meet at Fambridge YC on the Saturday for a meal at the marina bistro, cruise to Battlesbridge on the Sunday for Roy Hart's superb barbecue, drop down on the ebb to the Royal Burnham in the evening and depart for home on the Monday.

The end of May Crouch rally over 29th-31st promises to be a bit more physical. Meeting up again at the very hospitable Fambridge YC on Sat, there will be a race downriver and back on the Sunday, with a BBQ in the evening and a full cooked breakfast to prepare you for the trip home on Monday. Please complete the attached entry form and send it off in good time.

Unfortunately, coinciding with the Crouch rally is the Ostend at Anchor event; by all accounts a very enjoyable affair, around 150 interesting classic boats, lots to do and drink and absolutely zero racing - see glowing report in August 2009 Eastcoaster. Contact Mike McCarthy if you would like to attend.

Details of events later in the season in the next Eastcoaster.

And talking of Dutch cruising, Eastcoaster caught up with Howard Wheelton and Sue Lewis to ask about their extended Dutch cruise this summer in Bonify.



The raft at Battlesbridge

Cruising the Lowlands

Eastcoaster: Did you mostly sail or motor?

Howard and Sue: We sailed in the Delta and the IJsselmeer but in between, in the Mast-up Route which is mostly canals, we motored.

EC: Highest mileage in a day?

H&S: By boat (excluding the crossing) perhaps 40 or 45 miles – from Enkhuizen back to Haarlem when it was time to come home. By folding bike 30 miles – from Vlaardingen to the beach at Hook of Holland and back. Bum-numbing.

EC: A favourite place?

Howard: A little island called De Omloop in the Veerse Meer. We were introduced to it by the Hammetts (World Pres.) who have been going there for 30 years or more. I was stung in the mouth by a wasp which was trying to drown itself in my can of beer so to Brian's disgust have christened it Wasp Island.

Sue: Enkhuizen on the IJsselmeer. It's such a pretty place and we were there for the end of season rally of the Dutch Old Gaffers so we saw the old harbour full of our favourite kind of boats. But don't mention the racing.

EC: How did you get on racing with the Dutch Old

Gaffers?

Howard: Next question please.

EC: Anywhere you'd like to go back to?

Howard: I'd go back to Wilhelmina-Dok in North Amsterdam. Just before we moved on from the marina at Sixhaven we went for a walk and found this great bar/restaurant right on the waterfront. The best place I found for barge watching!

Sue: Hoorn is lovely and we were lucky enough to be there at the same time as Molly Vingerhoets with her little Deben Cherub Sea Nymph. We were there for a few days but were distracted by engine trouble and socialising so we didn't get a proper look around. There's a couple of museums there that I wish I had made time to visit.

EC: Sue mentioned engine trouble. What happened?

Howard: It's a long story. I'd been concerned about the starter motor for some time but as the problem was intermittent I hadn't done much about it. Of course when it failed it wasn't in a nice safe haven, oh no! We were sailing to Hoorn and when the time came to drop the sails and motor in, no starter. We hove to and I took it apart but I could see I wasn't going to get anywhere so we sailed into the outer harbour and anchored there. One reason I'd put off



Bonify

replacing it for so long was that I knew it would be very expensive, as indeed it was. £400 later (ouch!) Pete the Knife and Sarah kindly delivered a new one to us on their way to Enkhuizen. Problem solved.

EC: What was your best day?

H&S: While in Gouda we cycled to visit Rik Homan (who sails Otter on the East Coast when not sailing Pagan in Holland) at his little boatyard on the Reeuwijkse Plassen. Rik took us out on the lakes in his little open gaffer Elizabeth and we drank wine, ate cheese straws and swapped yarns in the sunshine.

EC: Did you learn anything new during the trip?

H&S: What we don't know now about water management in the Netherlands just isn't worth knowing. We visited the UNESCO World Heritage site at Kinderdijk with 19 original working windmills, the Delta Expo near Roompot and the storm surge barrier near Rotterdam.

EC: Did anything surprise you in Holland?

H: Yes, there are mackerel in the Oosterschelde! I know because I caught one at St Annaland. My son Owyn (14) was so keen to "bash its head in" that he jumped up and down in the cockpit and bashed his own head on the boom. So I killed the fish myself by striking it sharply on a fairlead, it went suddenly limp and slipped out of my hand back into the water.

EC: Any disappointments?

H: As above. I didn't manage to catch any more fish after that.

EC: Favourite Dutch food?

S: All things fishy: raw herring (Hollandse Nieuwe), smoked eel, whole fat smoked mackerel, and kibbeling, which is chunks of cod in a delicious soft batter, deep-fried.

H: I liked the kibbeling too, and the smoked mackerel is so much better than the vacuum packed version we get in the UK. But favourite for me was a frikandel, which is a deep fried sausage, with frites and mayo.

EC: Any nautical bargains to be had?

S: We found a second-hand oil lamp to hang in the centre of our saloon – not cheap at €70 but a lot cheaper than the new ones. And in the same shop a little brass foghorn for €5.

H: I found Swedish fids for splicing braided rope at less than half the price I'd have pay in the UK – €18

EC: Greatest frustration?

H&S: Getting our heads round the timetables of opening bridges and locks was a bit of a nightmare. You really don't want to be in a hurry. The best source of information is a publication you are supposed to have on board anyway: Wateralmanak 1 & 2. Volume 2 has the timetables in but you have to be determined: we renamed it Double Dutch 2. Beware of sneaky little asterisks that point out odd exceptions which are guaranteed to affect you if you haven't noticed them.

EC: Any other advice for readers of Eastcoaster?

H: Keep an eye on fuel – it's not that easy to find. A lot of the bunker boats sell only red diesel and some places that do sell the white stuff are closed after 1st September. And keep your fuel receipts: we were still on the fuel pontoon at Vlaardingen when Customs boarded us to check we'd bought white not red, so we were fortunately able to prove our innocence.

S: We were very impressed with the rail/sail deal available on Stena Line. We had to come back to the UK a couple of times during the summer and were able to do so for just £70 return each – including the rail ticket from any East Anglia station to any Dutch station. But you do have to book at least 2 weeks in advance to get that price.

EC: And finally – tell us about your funniest moment...

H&S: Sitting in Haarlem reading Steve Meakin's account of Maldon Town Regatta and the spectacular grounding of Mad Dog Mike McCafferty. We nearly choked on our stroopwaffeln.

Sue and Howard

Bermudan's Triangle

In the interests of impartiality, I'm attempting to include something about our 3-cornered friends in each issue. This time, it's an entertaining piece by Steve Meakin, a dyed-in-the-caulking gaffer, but who helped the East Coast crew of the classic bermudan Estrella show the locals the way home in the Solent Classic regatta last year.

One Stella Too Many

In November 2008, TJ, Fletch and I (two Stella owners and one who gets paid to race proper yachts) sat drinking beer in the Office (The Black Buoy pub, Wivenhoe). I mooted the idea of perhaps taking a Stella down to Cowes to compete in the British Classic Yacht Club Regatta. Stellas had been given an invite to join in this most prestigious event, it being their 50th year, and it sparked an idea in my mind to go and give them a run for their money. A few quizzical looks were exchanged and an idea was hatched. My pitch was simple. TJ had a tricked-up, beautifully restored Stella (named Estrella) which was ready to take on the best of the south coast classics. We had a top crew who was prepared to take a busman's holiday racing for a week and, of course, when it

came to selling my exceptional skills it was easy: I'd be the village idiot who would drink loads of beer (something I was later to prove every bit as good at as I'd promised I'd be). With the idea sold, the planning began. Fortunately Estrella comes complete with a trailer and so all we needed was something to tow it. Pro Crewman came through with his VW van – transport sorted.

For the rest of the winter nothing much was said about the regatta and we pushed it onto the back burner. Fast forward to June '09 and the idea is brought back on the gas and planning takes place. Estrella's owner hands out various tasks to us crew, safe in the knowledge that we would be focused and respond with the requested information etc. Unfortunately crew fails to pull finger out and so Estrella's owner organises regatta entry/berthing etc – could this be the theme for the week? Anyway, before we know it we're strapping Estrella's mast on deck and leaving Ipswich Marina fully loaded with boat, wet weather gear and coffee. As it transpires, coffee was to play a major role in the week, as it was discovered that Pro Crewman does not respond to any known language until he has consumed at least two litres of strong, sweet



it's downhill all the way in Estrella

coffee. In fact it was noted that Pro Crewman generally failed to get very animated at all on terra firma and so soon earned the nickname Bag Puss, as given any flat surface that was at least 6'5" long and 3 foot wide he would soon be horizontal and snoring.... very loudly. In fact his snoring on one occasion prompted our normally placid Estrella owner to get extremely violent with a cushion at four in the morning – a treasured moment for me!

Anyway, we left with boat in tow on the Saturday at five in the morning. We were meant to be on the road at four but waking Bag Puss at four in the morning should be attempted only at a safe distance; I was pleased to be outside his house well out of range of claws etc. On the road and first litre of coffee consumed. Bag Puss starts to stir having been driving for an hour already – “All right, what’s happening?” was all I got but at least I knew he was entering reality, albeit at his own pace – slowly. The trip down was easy and we arrived in Warsash Marina on the Hamble ready to launch. Warsash made us East Coast sailors feel at home as there wasn’t a lot of water to launch the boat and so frantic activity ensued, much to Bag Puss’s annoyance. As the slings were slipped around Estrella ready for launch we were busy cleaning her bottom readying her for a week’s racing. The launch was uneventful and the staff were friendly and we managed to get the rig up and the boat out into deep water in no time at all. That’s the thing about the Stella, fantastically simple – much like a dinghy to rig. With the boat rigged our attention turned to more pressing matters – where’s the nearest pub? It was suggested by our sensible skipper that perhaps 10am is a little early and that breakfast after a visit to the chandlery would be a better idea. After a bit of scratching and mumbling it was agreed and we headed off for essential boat stuff and a fantastic breakfast with great views. This took us up to lunchtime and of course after all that bacon we had a thirst and Bag Puss knew of a place at the top of the Hamble for liquid refreshment. Apparently the Jolly Sailor is a famous pub and we headed in that direction. Before we got to the pub we wandered through the Elephant Boatyard, which was very much up my fender board – full of old wooden boats, some of which were stunning and some of which were rotting. A number of metre boats and all other manner of classic wooden boats sat on the pontoons, whilst on the other side of the river the white plastics of Moodys etc. were so bright that Bag Puss had to put on some ‘sunnys’. Anyway, after having a good poke around we were off to the pub for a few ales. We had a fair few ales and hatched a plan to get back to the boat and

get underway to Cowes. The weather was grey and Cowes didn’t look that inviting, but off we motored down the Hamble and out across the Solent making the marina by late afternoon. Once in, calls were made to the ‘digs’. Digs had been organised by the famous East Coast boat Clarion of Wight. It turned out that Clarion was entering the marina just after us and so we left Estrella and headed for the nearest pub to await their arrival. The Clarion crew were an organised lot and had a house booked and agreed to let us have a basement room at a very reasonable rate. They gave us directions, and after some interesting discussion between skipper and Bag Puss over the location of the house we headed off up the hill. That hill every morning proved to be the walk of shame. Basically the format was from that day forth we never really remembered walking up it of an evening, but every morning it was the walk of shame. Hungover and somewhat dishevelled we would walk down desperately in need of coffee and some form of breakfast before the day’s racing.

Sunday was a down day, so this was spent mostly wandering from pub to pub. This definitely proved to be my downfall, as I started to feel very ‘flu-like and really wasn’t in any sort of a state to go racing next day.

Monday dawned blowing old boots and as we headed out at 10:30 for the start I was feeling decidedly ruff. Lacking any energy and struggling to stand up on a very wet foredeck wasn’t the best place to be, and a mistake with the kite highlighted this crewman’s shortcomings. That said, we managed a fourth in class and had I been a little more ‘on the ball’ I’m sure we could have added the race to the overall trophy haul.

Tuesday was the Ladies’ Race and unsurprisingly there wasn’t a queue of ladies lined up requesting to race on a little old Stella, especially as there were classic big yachts everywhere to pick from. Late in the day Bag Puss cleared a fur ball and went off to find us a lady. When he returned he had in tow a certain quarter-ton cup racer and so Ladies Race was go, go, go. Louise turned out to be an excellent helm and it was great to have another person on board who really knew her stuff. A great race unfolded despite the near gale blowing, and we were doing very well and very much in first place on handicap until, approaching the line off the Royal Yacht Squadron, we fell into a complete calm. We stopped dead and watched the boats in front of us race away unaffected by this wind hole. That’s racing I guess, but having raced a flawless race it

was very frustrating to watch the lead fall away and so we had to settle for third place.

Wednesday was cancelled due to horrendous weather. This was not good. All that happened was that the wind got Bag Puss lit up and before I knew it we were sitting in a pub sinking ale. We were joined by a certain East Coast sailmaker who after each glass of wine insisted he was leaving. I think a fair bit of wine was consumed and I don't really remember much, but I sincerely hope I didn't order a new suit of sails!

Thursday was the day all came good – Round the Island race. Again, yours truly was feeling like death although by now I couldn't work out whether this was down to the ale or 'flu or even both! Anyway, this was it and this really was the big one. Again Bag Puss went off hunting and came back with a crew which, given the weather conditions, was a great result. James proved to be a top guy with a good understanding of the Solent and was a real asset to the skipper. Round the Island is a long race and with a force 6 blowing is no fun in a small boat. That said, the skipper was completely 'dialled in' and I don't think we put a foot wrong. The BCYC sent us around the America's Cup route and so we went round the Island clockwise and it was a long old beat. We took a huge amount of water over the decks – there was a very confused sea as it was a lee shore and the sea was bouncing back off the Island creating the strangest conditions I've ever seen. At one stage whilst sitting out on the rail I looked down and there was nothing there; it was as if we had launched off a wave and were flying through the air. The other interesting thing during that stage of the race was the fact that I floated more times than I can remember,

whilst sitting out on the rail. There was so much water my entire lap was engulfed in water – not fun for five hours! Rounding the Needles was a great experience, as it was my first time. We went in close, but keeping a 'lighthouse length' away in order to avoid the wreck that lies off the Needles, just below the water. Safely around, it was time to fly the kite.... this was a step too far! No time at all after hoisting the kite, we broached and it all got very lively. Bag Puss was coming back from the foredeck as we broached and I remember looking at him thinking "He's standing on the mast... but still not looking overly animated!" Anyway, we spilled the wind from the main, got her up again and trundled off, managing 10 knots through the water. Seemingly only seconds later, we broached again and then a third time. The fourth time it was fairly normal and I started to enjoy myself – at least I wasn't sitting out on the rail getting wet. The fifth broach was not good, as there was a bang and that was the end of the spinnaker. Fortunately it was the old kite, but even so I felt for the skipper. We got the other one up just as we came across the outfalls in the Solent and that's where the sea really got up. I was standing in the companionway looking back, wondering when we were going to lose the rig, just as our stern wave caught us up and lapped over the aft deck and ran the full length of the side decks. Our wake was truly awesome; we were leaving the wake of a forty-foot motor boat – a great sight. We were punching a lot of tide and so we headed away from the Island to the other side of the Solent, to get into the shallows and out of the tide. Flying



Estrella in big seas off the Needles

along at eight knots with only a few feet of water under you is some experience and not one I'd be in a great rush to repeat; however, we were racing and this was the race we wanted more than anything. The skipper was going for it at all costs and his vessel was travelling well beyond the speeds she was designed for. It's a testament to the late designer, and to the crack helm, that we didn't just win our class but the Round the Island race overall, and by an extraordinary six minutes.

According to the organisers, it was small boat racing conditions. I'm not too sure about that, but it certainly showed what a small boat can achieve against much bigger opposition.

Friday was another round-the-cans race in the Solent and, due to Clarion of Wight blowing out her headsail on the Round the Island, we managed to pinch Adrian from her crew. Again the team didn't put a foot wrong and we sailed a tight race, winning by around four minutes on corrected time.

That was the end of the racing and we headed in, pleased that we had made a good account of ourselves. Then it was back to the house for showers and on with the blazers for the prize-giving in the Royal Yacht Squadron. The food came and then so did the prizes. The Skipper spent a lot of time collecting various trophies and glassware that evening and we were lucky to be sharing a table with the Clarion of Wight crew. We felt for them, as the blown headsail really ruined their event. That said, their spirits remained high and they couldn't have been more supportive of us. With the table full of trophies, we really let our hair down and partied late into the night. Even a run-in with the local hooligans couldn't dampen our spirits.

The next day was a long one. We motored Estrella back across the Solent and up the Hamble to where she was launched exactly a week previously. Nothing much was said on the trip but, through the hangover, we were all quietly pleased with what we achieved. The drive back involved lots of coffee and food. The boat was put back in the marina and then we headed off via Bag Puss's home and then on into Wivenhoe. Back to the office for a few beers, then bed. The next day involved more celebration partying with the Wivenhoe lot that ended in the early hours of Monday morning. A few hours later I was up for work.... struggling, to say the very least.

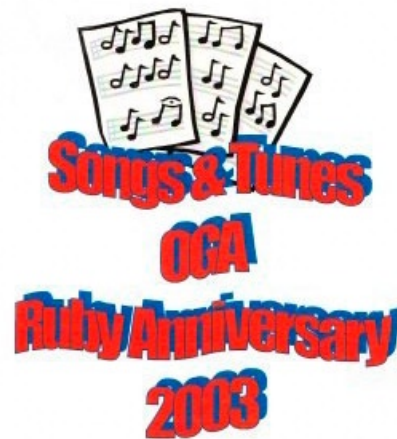
Steve Meakin

The Medway and Cinque Ports

This area of the OGA is adjacent to our patch. In fact, several of the Kent boats are frequent visitors to our events – Crow, Kajun and Tab Nab, for example – and it seems logical that we should try to form closer ties without compromising either area's individuality. There is a small area in numbers but big in enthusiasm, and one way we could reciprocate their visits would be by taking part in the Whitstable and Swale 'matches' in early August. Watch this space for more details.

Backstay

Old Gaffers' Song Book



The cover might ring bells with some of you. It is the front of an Old Gaffers' Song Book which was produced in 2003 in an attempt to get Gaffers on the East Coast singing – off the same hymn sheet! Although highly commendable, it had some drawbacks. There was a lack of unified format, composition and 'corporate identity'. Ideally, all the songs should have words, 'dots' (notes) and chords, but few had them all.

The idea of an East Coast Gaffers' Song Book has been resurrected, but with the advances in technology comes an alternative way of issuing it – on line. The cost of preparing a song book to be sold or given out would be considerable. The book could well get grubby and tatty, be anointed by the salty hoggin', or even lost. The idea being considered at present is a P-Y-O version: Print-Your-Own. There are now computer programs

available enabling you to write your own music, and these should contain those three vital ingredients – words, dots and chords – so everyone would be happy. It would then be possible to transfer onto this common format all the nautical songs we love to sing and play. We would have to watch the copyright aspect, but so many were written by that good old boy 'Trad' that we should be able to find more than enough of his work.

Once we have prepared a few such songs, it is then proposed that they will be put onto our area website in a separate section so that members can print them off and make up their own songbooks using a ring binder or the like. It is hoped that the number of songs will increase steadily; any special ones that members would like could be included. If you don't use a computer you will have to beg/borrow from/bribe a friend who does to print off a set for you.

I have volunteered to look into this idea and will report my progress in due course. I have been recommended to one such music program, but if anyone else has any experience of this sort of thing I would be very pleased to hear from them. Watch this space!

Graham Wadeson. 01394 383082.
graham@penpal.me.uk

East Coast Archive

As mentioned at the AGM, past president Rob Williamson has taken on the task of going through the records of the EC OGA since its inception in 1964, and reducing the vast volume of papers to a meaningful archive. Although not short of material, Rob would still like our more senior members to go through their records to see if they can turn up any historically useful stuff; he is particularly short of pre-1995 race programmes. If you have anything, Rob can be contacted on 01206 211318 or at charleswilliamson347@btinternet.com.

2011 Calendar

It is proposed that the East Coast area produces a calendar for sale to members in the autumn, so we will need some pictures! This is just a reminder to everyone to keep cameras handy during the season to capture those spectacular shots for inclusion in the calendar. More details in the next issue.

That's all for this time. Send any articles, pictures, comments, details of items for sale etc. to me:

Bernard Patrick
80 Rickstones Rd
Essex CM8 2ND
tel: 01376 516420
e-mail: bernard.patrick@waitrose.com

The next issue of Eastcoaster is due out in mid May 2010, so submissions by mid April please.

Finally, could I remind members who may have changed address to tell me, please? On the other hand, if you have told us of your move but are still not getting the newsletter, let me know. Thank you,

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