



OLD GAFFERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER No. 1970/3

First, a welcome to the following new members:

- M. T. Ambrose, 154 South Esk Road, Forest Gate, London, E.7.
- M. Bennett, Quay House, Kirby le Soken, Frinton on Sea, Essex.
Loreley
- J. Bluff, c/o Joyce Marine, Vespasian Road, Bitterne Manor,
Southampton. Njordskag
- Lt. Cdr. G. H. Dormer, R.N.R., Yew Tree Cottage, Dittisham,
Dartmouth, Devon. Awara
- J. Dry, 45 Victoria Street, Maidenhead, Berks.
Ministree
- Dr. J. J. S. Gibson, 75 Moulsham Drive, Chelmsford, Essex.
William & Emily
- D. Harrison, Falcon House, Queens Road, St. Helier, Jersey, C.I.
Tapuah
- C. L. Hoskins, Eastern Counties Scaffolding & Plant, Wilton Road,
Humberston, Grimsby, Lincs.
Armored
- R. W. Hurst, 28 Dorset Street, London, W.1.
Sea Harmony
- A. Kanssen, 172 Mile End Road, Colchester, Essex.
Stephanne
- B. Lambert, 54 East Road, West Mersea, Essex.
Scotia
- D. B. Lansley, 35 Kew Bridge Court, London, W.4.
- J. S. Lees, 47 South Holmes Road, Roffey, Horsham, Sussex.
Jacaranda
- R. G. Lewis, 171 High Street North, Stewkley, Leighton Buzzard,
Beds. D.T.
- R. H. MacGregor, 116 New Street, Brightlingsea, Essex.
George & Alice
- C. P. R. Morse, Colne Priory, Earls Colne, Colchester, Essex.
Brandysnap
- R. M. Needham, 7 Brook Lane, Coton, Cambridge.
Dawn Wind
- Mr. & Mrs. A. Odell, M.F.V. Swan, Winnipeg, Alexandra Dock,
Grimsby, Lincs. Swan
- Miss P. E. O'Driscoll, 18 Dunoon Road, London, S.E.23.
- K. C. J. Paterson, 389 Little Wakering Road, Barling Magna,
Southend, Essex. Peggy
- Miss A. Phelps, Timbercot, Waterside, Bradwell on Sea, Essex.
Candide
- P. J. Powell, 47 Park Lane, Castle Donnington, Derby.
- C. Ramsay, 2 Highcliff Mansions, Highcliff Drive, Leigh on Sea,
Essex. Boy Martin
- M. Robinson, 23 Holt Drive, Wickham Bishops, Witham, Essex.
Tarka
- J. P. Silvester, 9 Belsize Square, London, N.W.3.
- C. Stebbens, 4 Lock Hill, Heybridge Basin, Maldon, Essex.
Maud
- H. R. P. Turner, Colne Priory, Earls Colne, Colchester, Essex.
Brandysnap
- G. L. Ventris, 31 Wakering Road, Shoeburyness, Essex.
Myrrhine
- N. Wagner, 58 Fellows Road, London, N.W.3.
Dabchick
- A. H. Warde, Rosetree, Cakeham Road, West Wittering, Chichester,
Sussex. Geisha

2.

DIARY DATES

Saturday, August 15th Rally at Gin's Farm, Beaulieu River.

Saturday, September 12th Solent Race at Cowes. 11 a.m. at the Royal Corinthian.

Saturday, November 7th Social evening at the Maldon Little Ship Club, The Hythe, Maldon. Buffet supper etc. No need to book - just come along.

SUBSCRIPTIONS The reminders sent out with the last issue resulted in a swelling of our bank account. However, there are still some defaulters. If you have not paid your Subs., this will be your last Newsletter unless we hear from you in the very near future!

ADDRESSES Please inform us if you move. We try to run a good, efficient service to our members, but we can't anticipate changes of address. When we get Newsletters returned marked 'gone away', there is nothing we can do, other than to reluctantly delete a name from our lists.

Also, please advise us of your postal codes. And please note that the code for Fambridge Road, Maldon, is CM9 6AF.

O.G.A. MEMBERSHIP FLAGS Some of our members are also members of other clubs, and when cruising in local waters (correctly) fly the 'home' club burgee at their masthead. Similarly, members of clubs with Admiralty warrants to fly a blue ensign may prefer to cruise under that club's burgee so they can wear their blue ensign. So that these members can correctly indicate that they also belong to the O.G.A., we have bought a stock of square O.G.A. membership flags which can be flown from the starboard crosstree. These membership flags should NOT be worn at the masthead, where they would be mistaken for a racing flag.

It has been suggested that when attending O.G.A. functions (at which the O.G.A. triangular burgee will be at the masthead) the membership flag can be flown at the starboard crosstree to indicate that the owner is ready to welcome aboard other O.G.A. members.

Flags available are 16" x 12" at £1, or 20" x 16" at £1 6s. (£1.30) from John Scarlett at 70b Fambridge Road, Maldon, or from M. D. Millar, 107 Baker Street, London W1M 1FE. Please make all cheques etc. payable to the Old Gaffers Association.

BACK NUMBERS OF NEWSLETTERS With the vast increase in membership, we have run out of copies of 1970/1 and 1970/2. It is hoped to be able to re-print these during the winter so that all 1970 members can have the full set. This is particularly regrettable in view of the article currently being serialized, but I started the year running off 50 spare copies!

At some time in the future (Winter 1972?) it is hoped to be able to offer newer members complete year's sets of back numbers, if sufficient members are interested to pay for the paper etc., and to make it worth running the duplicator.

Time is the main factor here. As many of you know, I have been trying to coin a bit more money by writing a book (on electronics). That venture is now over, but the publishers have given me a contract for a second book, so I anticipate another busy winter!

NORTH-WESTERN AREA A member who has raced in the O.G.A. East Coast and Solent Races has moved to the North West, and is very keen to start a race there. Would all members in that area (Lancashire, North Wales, etc.) who are interested please contact:

T.S. Gannon, 14 Park St., Barnoldswick, Colne, Lancs.
Tel: Barnoldswick 3405.

Terry has duplicator, typewriter, etc. and is keen to put them to good use!

1970 EAST COAST RACE

Well, it had to happen sometime - strong to gale force winds on race day, but it was a pity it happened on the year that a significant number of our bigger boats had not entered. Cutlass, Duet and Theodora, to mention only three, could have enjoyed an excellent race, but for various very good reasons they were not entered.

The entry was well up to standard - 77 boats listed in the final programme (of which plenty of copies are available at 4 s., including postage) plus 3 late entries. However, 7.0 a.m. at Stone showed a dull grey sky, a fresh to strong wind, and disappointingly few gaffers about. No last minute entries, for a change. Class 3 (both owners who had got to Stone) decided to postpone their start and see if the wind eased. Classes 1 and 2 were started at the stated time, but what a fiasco!

Peter Willetts shot off in his little ex-beach boat Louise, followed shortly after by Sea Pig. Mjojo and Deva were more or less on the line, but heading up river, other boats were below, beating up, whilst about a dozen boats above the line milled around apparently aimlessly. Band of Hope showed signs of life, and slipped off whilst we weren't looking, but the rest stayed firmly above the line; some boats put their sails up and then stowed them. Charles Stock had anchored Shoal Waters close inshore, and a loud hail woke him up to the fact that he should have been off. The almost frantic bridge team considered all means of signalling to the non-starting boats that the race WAS under way, and had ultimately to send out the rescue launch. The 70 ft. Baltic trading ketch Solvig moved off down river, with topsail set, then, about three quarters of an hour after the start, Hypatia, L'Atalanta, Mjojo, Iskra and Amity crossed the line. Fanny, Deva, Ethelinda, Oriette, Dorcis, Scotia and Sea Minx completed the list of starters. 17 boats out of 77! (Three boats had scratched before the day). Then the telephone calls and messages came in. Boats stuck in Bradwell Creek, windbound in West Mersea, or up the Colne. Boats beached for the day above Stone. As our President, who was unable to be with us for the day, said in his telegram, 'Gaffers weather will sort men from boys'. And no disrespect to those who stayed ashore. It was a day for a sound boat, sound gear, and able bodied crews - not our usual happy family day out, or the sort of day to hope a slightly suspect splice would hold. No, nobody can be criticised in any way for not going. Even at that time in the morning it was obvious that the race would be no joyride.

By lunchtime the wind had increased, and a close watch was kept on the mouth of the river for boats beating back up. Shortly after 12 o'clock, gaff sails were sighted, and at 7 minutes past 2 the 4-tonner Ethelinda crossed the line - but with an ensign flying instead of a racing flag. It took a further 40 minutes for the next boat to beat up. This was the 37 ft. Norfolk beach boat Amity, owned by Peter Crofts and David Newbon. She was a splendid sight as she tacked up, her long clinker hull appearing to ignore the waves. (Mr. Newbon said later that their speed varied between 10 knots and 2 knots, so she certainly felt the effects of the waves!) Next came the little Louise, looking most wet and uncomfortable, but it was found she had retired. Then just over twenty minutes after Amity came Fanny of Cowes - showing alternate ends of her ballast keel, and sending sheets of spray (and a lot of more solid lumps of water) in all directions. In previous years, that row of reef points up near the top of Fanny's mainsail has looked rather odd, and too high up to be usable. This year showed their use. With her gaff jaws almost on the gooseneck, Fanny showed her contempt for wind and waves.

Fanny was followed by one of the most interesting boats ever to have entered our races, Rodney Pickering's and Colin Frost's Mjojo. This 39 ft. cutter was built by her owners in Kenya in 1967, and has the hull lines of a dhow, with a rig

4.

similar to that of a bawley. She had made a fine sight on the run down, but damaged headsails had reduced her efficiency for the beat back, to the point where she was wearing ship at the southerly end of each tack. Over on the North shore the water was smoother and she could come round through the wind.

Mjojo crossed the line at 13 minutes to 4, followed a couple of minutes later by Colin Green's 34 ft. Prawner Oriette. After watching Fanny and Mjojo battling through, over and under the waves, Oriette appeared to be riding very steadily indeed, sliding through all the rough water like Amity. Like Amity, Oriette was still showing a fair length of luff on her mainsail.

Then half an hour later came the fifth and last finisher, Jon Wainwright's 24 ft. Rivers Class Prawner Deva. Like Fanny, her gaff jaws appeared to be resting on her gooseneck, but it was almost impossible to see her low hull. Jon's declaration contains the best possible written summary of the race:-
'Bloody wet, bloody cold, bloody windy (est. 9) . . . Fanny is too fast!!!!'

And how fast IS Fanny? Amity's log (a good one!) recorded 38 miles travelled through the water. Fanny is possibly closer winded, and may have made less leeway than Amity, but she must have covered something like 30 miles, in about 6 hours 20 minutes! For a 24 ft. boat this is almost incredible. Amity, Deva and Oriette were not too badly matched on corrected time, but Fanny's time is about 10% faster! The final placings were:-

(Start 08 00 00)

			CORR. TIME	POSN. OVER LINE	FIN. TIME	CLASS
1	Fanny of Cowes	D.T. Cook	6 20 27	2	15 08 56	2o
2	Amity	D. Newbon	7 00 52	1	14 47 26	1o
3	Deva	J. Wainwright	7 12 10	5	16 23 35	2o
4	Oriette	C.F. Green	7 47 07	4	15 51 50	1
5	Mjojo	C. Pickering	8 36 14	3	15 49 18	1

As we had far more prizes than boats, the Class prizes were awarded with the major trophies. Fanny thus took the East Coast Old Gaffers Trophy and first Class 2; Amity won the Tom Bolton Cup and first Class 1; Oriette won the Stone Trophy and second Class 1; Mjojo won the Sheave Trophy and third Class 1; Deva won the second Class 2 prize.

The Lifteraft Hire Company Seamanship Cup presented a problem. It was felt that all five finishers had shown such a level of seamanship that it would not have been fair to the other four to single one out for this award, so after consultation with the donor it was agreed to award it to the crew of Sea Pig, who had put up a magnificent performance until she had to retire off Bradwell on the way back.

Can any conclusions be drawn from the race? Can it be considered significant that both the Morecambe Bay Prawners entered completed the course, and appeared more at home in the rough conditions than the other boats which sailed up, except Amity? (A third prawner, Snowdrop, scratched before the race because her unfortunate owner had 'ventilated his foot' with, of all weapons for an O.G.A. member, a pitchfork!)

One conclusion is that an old boat need not be unseaworthy - Fanny is only 98 years old! And three out of five finishers are over fifty - Oriette is still 'running in' - she was launched as recently as 1924!

What about the start? We heard several times that 'the flags could not be seen clearly'. However, I wish some of the owners who made this complaint would be fair. In previous years some of them have criticised the race committee for failing to read the names on their boats. But the flags are a lot bigger, plainer and more boldly coloured than their names! All right, we have to accept that they did not see the flags. Perhaps in

future they will be more sympathetic when their boat's name is not read properly, and they might think of the problems of the bridge team!

The bridge team got the message O.K., and we hope to have a solution which will make it easier for owners to know when the race has started. We hope the owners will also get the point of our complaints now! The gentleman with an adequately painted name who held up a large numbered card need not worry - we appreciated that! We also appreciated the efforts others went to to make their boats identifiable, but we still have some 'problem children' in our fleet.

The evening party at Stone was much more subdued than usual, as so many crews were scattered around most of the Essex ports, but it was nevertheless an enjoyable evening.

Mrs. Miles, wife of the Commodore of Stone Sailing Club, presented the prizes for us, after which the O.G.A. presented Stone Sailing Club with an oil painting of a typical scene in an East Coast Old Gaffers Race, specially painted for us by the distinguished marine artist Vic Ellis of Leigh on Sea. (Having had the picture on my bedroom wall for some weeks, and grown very fond of it, my feelings were somewhat mixed as I saw it hung in its proper home!)

The evening was rounded off by a showing of colour slides of the day's sailing by Bob Stratton, of Studio One, High Street, Maldon. After what could not have been an easy day afloat, he did very well indeed to get the slides prepared for the evening showing.

The new bar (and its contents) at Stone Sailing Club was very much admired, and once again we have to thank the Officers, Committee and Members of the Club for their efforts on our behalf.

Finally, it was very nice to see Mr. and Mrs. Pot, and Ron Francis from the Solent area amongst the spectators. How about some regular East Coast members visiting Cowes for the day on September 12th? Better still, how about sailing round and racing?

SOLENT RACE REMINDER

Saturday, September 12th. Start 11.00 a.m. at the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club, Cowes.

Entry Fee £1 up to first post on Thursday, September 3rd. Thereafter, £1 15s., until Thursday, September 10th. £2 on day at Cowes. Non-members 10s. extra. Suppers £1 each.

All entries, correspondence, etc., to M. D. Millar, 107 Baker Street, London W1M 1FE. Post sent to Maldon the week prior to the race will NOT be dealt with as I shall be at Cowes.

ENTRANTS IN THE EAST COAST RACE

EAST COAST RACE SUPPERS It appears that a considerable number of entrants who had ordered suppers missed the meal through 'stress of weather'. A number of suppers were sold on the night, so when the accounts are all sorted out, it is hoped to be able to offer some refund against unused supper tickets.

FOR SALE

LARGE GAFF-RIGGED DINGHY. 16' x 6' x 2'3". Built by Lambre of Wallsend on Tyne in 1960. Larch and Mahogany. Centre plate. Outboard motor.
J. Owen, Randolphs Farm, Iden, Sussex. Tel: Iden 301.

ADVERTISEMENTS

SEA FEVER Gaff cutter. 28' x 9' x 2.5'. Ex-ship's lifeboat. Clinker hull, with centre board. Thornycroft engine, 10 h.p. Calor gas. Completely fitted out for family cruising. 4/5 berths. Regular entrant in East Coast Race. Lying Ferry Dock, Woodbridge. £495

R. Simper, Sluice Cottage, Ramsholt, Woodbridge, Suffolk.
Tel: Shottisham 273.

EMANUEL Famous Old Gaffer, which Cdr. Graham sailed alone to Newfoundland. See Mariner's Library 'Rough Passage', Uffa Fox's second book, etc. Gaff Cutter. 7 tons T.M. Built 1928. 30' x 25' x 8.5' x 5'. Sail area 475 sq. ft. Raised topsides give exceptionally comfortable accommodation. 8 h.p. Stuart Turner. Has just been extensively refitted. Lying S. Devon. £1,750 o.n.o.

G. H. Dormer, Yew Tree Cottage, Dittisham, Dartmouth, Devon.

SEA WIGEON Reg. 4 ton Cutter. 26' x 7.5' x 4.5'. Built Bert Chislett, Poole 1897. 4 berths, calor gas, 2 burners w. grill. 4 sails inc. unused topsail. 11.8 h.p. Coventry Victor Petrol. Full equipment includes compass, flares, fire extinguisher, 4 life jackets. Extensively cruised. Lying Clare Lallow, Cowes. Just undergone major refit, costing to date over £300. At present topsides burnt off and will be painted to new owner's specification. Last surveyed August 1969 before the refit & surveyor commented 'This craft is in remarkably good order for her age'. Owner buying aux. trading vessel for conversion, therefore requires quick sale. £1,000 o.n.o.

M. Stanfield, 33 Wellington Court, London, S.W.1.

Tel: 01-242-2041 (day time) 01-589-1626 (evenings)

PRISCILLA CK 437 Colchester Smack, 40' x 10' x 4.5'. Has been used for commercial fishing but retains sailing mast, rudder, etc. Wheelbox easily removed. Ford 6D diesel & trawl winch, but no structural alteration from original sailing trim. Ferrograph Offshore 500 sounder (new). Fishing gear. Last 2 items could be removed and sold separately. Lying West Mersea. £1,200 o.n.o. C.J. Jameson, Crossways, Prince Albert Road, W. Mersea, Essex.

Tel: West Mersea 2843.

HENRIETTE Lovely old aux. Gaff Cutter, after nine years of happy ownership is now looking for a new home. Morecambe Bay Prawner built & designed by Crossfields of Arnside, 1913. Pitch pine on oak. Photograph in Daily Telegraph, 27th April. 40' x 33' x 10.5' x 4.5'. 14 tons T.M. Solid pine mast & spars. Main cabin teak, after cabin walnut. 2 berths in forecabin, 2 in saloon, 1 in after cabin. All sails & rigging in very good order, separate W.C. 12 volt lighting, solid fuel stove, calor gas cooker, w. oven. Twin 8 h.p. Stuart Turners. Deck winch. Good deal of spare gear. Clinker built dinghy, outboard motor. £1,600.

D. Grant, 65 Beccles Drive, Barking, Essex. 01-594-4325.

IOLANTHE Francis B. Cooke's own Blackwater Sloop, designed by Dan Webb & built at Maldon in 1938. As described in Mr. Cooke's books. 18.5' x 6.5' x 3'. 4 h.p. Stuart auxiliary. Completely re-fitted 1967/68, in excellent condition. New gaff & boom, new tanned terylene mainsail & foresail. Engine fully overhauled. Owner buying larger. Lying Essex. £650.

Dr. G. Bolt, Kings Lynn General Hospital, Kings Lynn, Norfolk.

Tel: Kings Lynn 2255 (day) Hillington 355 (late evenings)

WANTED 40' x 7" grown MAST, preferably in the Solent area. Larger one for cutting down will do. Medium repairs not objected to. Any information very gratefully received. S. Hodges, 'Black Duck', Chichester Yacht Basin, Birdham, Sussex.

WANTED Approx. 20' gaff cutter or sloop. Suitable for single-handed sailing. Fairly straight stem & stern, shallow draught. Up to £500.

E. W. Tritton, 8 Beechwood Ave., Farnborough, Orpington, Kent.

BR6 7EX.

CANCELLED - Bought Roama

SYNDICATION ? IT'S ALL THE RAGE

By A.E.Braithwaite,

Nightfall

We had cruised for some years as an irresponsible unit of largely carefree bachelors, only one partner being well and truly married, but to a very understanding and lively girl, who sometimes joined us for our weekends afloat. Our cruising generally took place out of season as we preferred a large craft and vacant moorings, all at low cost. Most of these craft were hired on the Broads and Thames from understanding boatyard skippers who, I sincerely believe, recognised enthusiasm and were prepared to let us have their best craft, sometimes in January or February, in conditions of weather that certainly "angels would fear".

The idea of purchasing a yacht of our own en syndicate developed slowly and finally germinated at about the seventh pint in some hospitable bar. We had not got a penny between us !

From such beginnings we inspected gravely all yachts from dinghies to £100,000 luxury cruisers, even going so far as to leave a deposit one way out night on a totally unsuitable craft being sold for what are now obvious reasons to the nearest sucker. We awoke next morning and wrote it off to experience.

This sharp awakening made us aware that we must define our wishes and lay it off against the realities of our assets and we arrived at a figure of craft of between £500 and £1500 asking price, and it must be a yacht with good sailing qualities fully powered by an inboard engine, toilet, four berths, full standing headroom, and perhaps a little character thrown in.

We had calculated our cash figure on the basis of a £50 per member "throw-in" as a deposit and the rest kindly supplied by a finance company (money being easier to borrow then). Our syndicate was to be legalised by full registration of our interests at the Board of Trade.

Our search was now to begin in earnest. We enjoyed a number of abortive viewings, including one where, on preparing to row out to view, we were approached by two well fitted out young ladies who wished to crew for us by the weekend. As we have never been approached since, I have formed the view that they were employed by the sales agent as "loss leaders".

Finally we called at a well known boatyard in Maldon and on being presented with a small list of craft for sale promptly got on the wrong boat and inspected her thoroughly. It was exactly what we wanted - a little old perhaps, and in need of a refit, but we felt at home.

"We are very interested in Nightfall", we said to Dickie Richardson, the boatyard owner.

"Well, she is not on the list I gave you, but I do think the owner wishes to sell", replied he, and so it started.

Long weeks of survey and negotiations with Jim May, the owner, and finally a deal was clinched, and in September 1961 she became ours.

We had a decent refit on her that winter and sailed off to our first home port, Brightlingsea, the next spring.

Since then we have used Nightfall every season in a variety of anchorages and the syndicate has stuck together providing a very necessary relief from the business of life, giving us the best in sailing at an individual cost which resembles 1930 yachting.

As a way of maintaining and running a yacht today, I can surely recommend it, and I pass on the following advice to those who might consider 'syndication'.

8.

Firstly, equal ignorance of sailing in all parties is a blessing which, if tempered with enthusiasm, will provide a firm foundation on which to build. I say this as I have an idea that friction will easily develop in the initial stages if any one member of the syndicate has pre-formed views on how a boat should be run. This does not mean, however, that equal experience can be ruled out as a basis on which to form a syndicate.

Secondly, the number in the syndicate must be even in order to provide a large percentage for or against any disputed matter or, more important, an equal vote, in which case the matter is shelved for further thought. A good number is four.

The partnership should be legally registered with the boats papers and financing agreed as if no one was available to work on her during fitting out, that is to say, a quote from a yard for all work to be done professionally is obtained and this figure divided by the number in the group annually.

We include in our own figure sundry items such as initial stores and drinks, which give each year's sailing a good start.

Now for those who wish to work during fitting out. It would be unfair to allow them to save costly labour charges with no recompense and we have an allowance system covering car mileage, food, and other expenses payable each time a member works on the boat whilst she is laid up, thus providing an encouragement to labour and reap.

A central bank account is run by the secretary with a majority number of the group to sign each cheque and individual annual payments are made in twelve monthly instalments, preferably by bankers order. Extra calls for cash are made each year if necessary when the syndicate may decide to purchase, say, a new suit of sails or a new engine.

Generally, however, it is like most things in life, the burdens are shared with goodwill, the pleasures are twice over, and a little common sense can, with syndication, widen the scope of your sailing budget to horizons that most of us would never otherwise reach alone.

You're never hard up for crew either.

A.E.B.

Y-FELINHELI TO RICHMOND - VIA WIGAN Continued

We fled before the gale and set a course for Conway and Deganwy. The sea was quite bad - the dinghy joined us in the cockpit on two occasions. The trouble with the Deva when running at speed is that her stern settles right down as the bow lifts and although no sea has ever come over, the dinghy could ride right over the stern. One spends more time steering Deva's stern away from the dinghy than looking out for the broach.

We made Conway in a couple of hours, missing shipwreck by inches. We went the wrong side of the Mussel Hill beacon which marks some rocks and scraped over a sandbank in the middle of the fairway. We asked a local where a spare mooring was - we had just passed it. We turned about to face the wind and a 4 knot tide. Even the last word in sailing craft could not have beat that lot.

So, with a roar, I jumped below, swore once, kicked twice, and the Stuart replied with a bang and a puff of smoke, there-upon it started to strangle itself. As we surged down on a craft at anchor we prayed. We prayed to Mr. b.... Stuart Turner, the mechanics at Henley-on-Thames - even Neptune might help !

I don't know which god answered, but there was a sudden peace in the air. There was much smoke and it came to pass that the angel of petroleum came down and smote the carburettor....

To say the least, the engine picked up at the last moment (our boom was a foot from the anchored craft) and gave its best for a couple of minutes, sufficient for Nick to grab the mooring buoy. Having made fast, the engine gave a death-cry and passed away.

Conway was no better than Beaumaris. Thousands of tourists but absolutely no girls. Nick was very disappointed. I wrote a letter to my 'steady' in Plymouth, in frustration! Compensation came in the form of a quayside pub - Liverpool Arms - and a T.V. shop to watch the World Cup.

We went to Bangor (by bus) next day to collect the sail. The sailmaker had done an excellent job. He then muttered something about ten pounds - he's spent hours on the job - then with a celtic wink said "Well, for you boy, thirty bob will be fine!"

We lay in Conway for a few days, making arrangements with the owner in London, rigging the forestay and bending the mainsail. We also drank a fair quantity of ale and slept. One of the days was spent in taking the dinghy twelve miles up the Conway river, a dis-used navigation which wanders up a beautiful valley. We also knocked the propeller out of gear while shooting a weir; this was repaired by the string of Nick's anorak!

Eventually my father arrived - complete with a radio direction finder and our college reports (we passed!). With the car we could now visit Liverpool and see the 'lie' of the land and spread our socializing over a wider range.

At long last the weather abated and the second attempt to beat out of Conway was successful. We were glad to be at sea again - I believe it was Lord Nelson who said that Harbour rots good men!

The sea was still confused but the wind was dying so it took some time to double the Orme, a huge rock, an English Gibraltar in Wales! On rounding the Orme we eased the sheets, set the spinnaker, and headed for the West Constable Buoy.

Then a terrible thing happened - father dropped the 'gents' over the side. That bucket was the maid of all purposes - brush cleaning, boiling of underwear, bailing the dinghy - an endless list. Although we laugh about it now, it was a savage blow at the time. It was the Elsan or nothing now - there's no pulpit on Deva.

The wind had dropped to nothing by now, so the Stuart Turner came into action again. The tide was against us. We had another four hours of the ebb to plug when the North Constable came abeam, and Deva was making a mere 3 knots. The weather was very strange now. Ugly black clouds were hanging over the Menai Strait and were dotted all around the horizon. Deva seemed to be sailing along in a tiny patch of sunlight all on her own, like an actress on the stage in a spotlight. Conditions as they were, we decided to haul down the spinnaker. It was only a matter of time before the gale struck.

This strange phenomenon hung over us for hours while Deva motored through a sea of molten lead. West Hoyle came abeam, the tide changed, but under power alone we were still only making a good four and a half knots. Far out on the horizon we could see a prawner at work, under sail and power. (Many of the working prawners still use a cut down rig. Mainsail and motor are standard means of propulsion.) Still the wind did not come. We had cut our timing rather fine by not leaving Conway till half past two and at our present speed we wouldn't hit the unlit Rock Channel until dark.

The Rock Channel is as dangerous as it sounds with reference to rocks, but it is badly silted up at the moment (Merchant ships use the Queens Channel which is about 14 miles to the North.) When we used to sail out of Liverpool we found

it was almost impossible to get through at half-tide. In fact I had always made a point of running aground in the Rock.

However in darkness with a gale imminent it was vital that we did not run aground. We passed the Horse Buoy at dusk and headed for the last two lit buoys which mark the entrance to the channel. By the time we reached them it was pitch-black darkness, although there were many dazzling lights of New Brighton.

The Stuart Turner then decided to call it a day. No night-shift tonight. And then the wind came - offshore force five in our teeth. This succession of calamities completely threw us off balance. There we were, lee gun'l under haring into unknown sandbanks and shipwrecks. We did have a fighting chance though. The channel is about fifty yards wide!

Then all the old knowledge of three years ago came back. Some of those lights in New Brighton belonged to a series of multi-storey flats which I remembered from the days of sailing in the Liverpool Bay. I guessed the distance we were from the shore and set a course when I reckoned the dip in the sandbanks would be. Deva tacked and tacked at a furious rate. I've never seen those headsails brought round so quickly. It was turning into a terrifying night - rain was starting to descend. How much longer could we keep this up? We weren't more than ten yards from the banks every time we tacked.

Providence smiled on the Deva. The Rock light appeared through the mirk and came abeam. Rock Ferry pier came by. We were through! The only time I have ever navigated the Rock Channel without running aground! Providence smiled again. As we tacked inshore a mooring buoy, a good stout one, popped under our bows. Heroically Nick and the owner grabbed it. Within ten minutes all sail was stowed and supper was on the calor stove. Sometimes you gets yer luck, sometimes yer don't!

However, there was one danger left. Shipping. The River Mersey at this point is one of the busiest rivers in the world. It serves four ports, Liverpool, Birkenhead, Garston and Manchester. The danger of shipping was a real one to Deva, for three years previously she had been sunk at her moorings after being rammed by a ship. She had only been ours for a fortnight then and to hear that she had been sunk in thirty feet of the world's leading open sewer was no joke. It was a year before she lost the smell of sewage and oil. This being so, an anchor watch was set up, armed with a Verrey pistol to fire at any ship which came near! That was a horrible night. Rolling gun'ls under, bitterly cold and anything which could make life more miserable did happen. Tempers contracted, tea spilt, sausages burnt and we were forever being thrown on each other by the violent motion.

Luckily daybreak arrived and a shore party took the dinghy through the hair-raising seas to land at New Brighton. After re-fagging and re-victualling we set the storm-jib and made our way slowly to Liverpool.

Off the Waterloo dock entrance Deva hove to, to wait for the tide to make a level. However, we were seen by the dock Superintendent who said we could lock in after a freighter came out. So ten minutes later we locked in, in company with a floating crane and a couple of tug-boats. Little Deva felt very important, in this huge lock for ocean liners. Three men took our lines and kept the strain on while the lock filled up. Even the sluice operator was courteous. He let the lock fill ever so slowly so as not to damage the Deva.

The little nobby chugged out of the lock into the placid waters of Waterloo dock. We were just mooring when a couple of officials came along, not to fire questions at us, but to admire the Deva. They had remembered seeing her when she sailed from Canning half-tide dock some two years ago. Only out of politeness did they ask our plans. We told them we were making for Boston. No, not that Boston, we were going via Wigan and Leeds! Did they mind if we lay alongside a high quay to lift the mast out? They said they had a much better idea - why not

use a little hand-crane in Princes half-tide dock? If we didn't mind waiting five minutes, they would open the swing bridge and send a man along to help us!

To cut a long story of courteousness short, Deva was de-rigged and ready for the Inland passage in less than an hour. I must at this point pay a tribute to the Liverpool dock operatives. With a service which cost us not one penny, we were made more welcome than in any other port the Deva has ever visited. When one considers the amount of sea-going trade that Liverpool handles, it is pleasant to see a little nobby from North Wales receive the same attention as a Blue Funnel Liner from the Far East.

We spent the rest of that day seeing the Insurance company about my car crash and the Deva's cover for the Inland voyage. This, and the fetching of the car from Conway to take the dinghy back to London, meant we had to spend a night in Liverpool. Well, much as Nick and I wished to spend a civilized night in the 'right' clubs in Liverpool, we were just about well enough dressed to get drunk in a dockside pub - so that's what we did.

However, dockside pubs had changed since I had last been in one. We were the only customers not in suits! Chromium plate, formica surfaces and upholstered furniture was the general decor. However, I think crime was still part of the scene. While we were shifting our keg bitters down our throats the police burst into the pub. As they were looking around we noticed a pathetic little man under our table with his finger to his lips. Well, rather than risk a razor fight with the locals, we kept quiet!

We slept a horrible sleep until mid-day next day, when we decided to find out where the Leeds-Liverpool Canal began. It was supposed to begin at Stanley dock where we were berthed, but all we could see was a hole in the dock wall which looked like a sewer outlet (they reckon every Liverpool dock has one of those!) However, there was always a chance that the sewer might have come via the Canal, so we decided to take the dinghy (Devette - later to be lost off the Goodwin Sands in a westerly gale). We came to a rusty old ladder under the outlet which we scaled to find daylight.

The sight which presented itself to us was not pretty. Nick said that we must have been plastered last night to have slept through World War 3. The landscape around consisted of crumbling buildings surrounded by three feet of rubble divided by a narrow strip of liquid mud. We walked along for a hundred yards or so. We came to some ruins which originally had been a small dwelling. 'Hey Nick!' I said, 'That must have been your actual lock-keeper's cottage before the (hydrogen) bomb dropped!' Sure enough there was an old name plate lying in the rubble with 'Leeds and Liverpool Canal Co' etc., written on it. We came to a part of the ruin that was still standing and peered through a broken down door.

'Look, Jon, there's one of yer actual survivors!' said Nick, indicating with amazement a weather beaten old man in a dirty old raincoat eating chips out of the News of the World.

After checking the unfortunate fellow for radio-activity, we found out that he was the actual lock-keeper. He had been notified about our arrival by British Waterways in London. The chief lengthsmen (George) would be along at 4 o'clock to give us a hand to get the locks going- the last vessel to come through had locked in some six months ago.

Without more ado the auxiliary gaff cutter was ready to cast off. Steam had been raised about the Stuart Turner, the mast and ancillary spars had been laid on two sets of supports and to top it all the lavatory seat covered the mast-hole.

What follows now is a first-hand account of the Battle of Stanley Dock cut A.D. 1966.

Deva steamed into the sewer outlet and entered No. 1 lock of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal. The lock gates banged shut behind us. The paddles of the upper gates were opened and the

lock filled up rapidly. The top gates creaked open on the level. Our first canal lock - now for the other 115 locks to Boston. Full steam ahead all. Deva quickly gathered speed. Then came a horrible grating sound and her prow reared up in the air, like a stallion stepping on a snake. This had me worried. They reckon that three feet six is the maximum draft on the Leeds-Liverpool Canal, Deva's is 3' 9" in normal trim and I had told British Waterways that she drew 3' 5". However, all was not lost. More water was let down from the next pound and Deva returned to a more lady-like horizontal position.

Then the enemy attacked. Brickbats, bones and jagged stones whistled through the air, churning the green waters into boiling pea soup. I have never felt more helpless. Nothing to throw back, no visible enemy to return fire to. It was difficult enough to steer Deva out of the lock without having to dodge half-bricks, any one of them capable of putting me out for the count. Miraculously not one missile hit the Deva, even though her decks were drenched with the spray thrown up. As soon as Deva was sheltered in the next lock we returned fire with pieces of the ruined lock-keeper's hut - I hope no bystanders were struck, but it was nice to hear the little b...s appreciating their own medicine.

Finally we emerged at the top of Stanley Dock Cut to join the Leeds-Liverpool Canal. We asked the lengthsman where we could moor for the night, out of range from urchins. He suggested Litherland Life Bridge - handy pub. He also lent us a key to unlock the barriers - the Cut at Liverpool is locked up at all times to prevent (more) vandalism.

So, with Nick and myself aboard Deva 'steamed' on to the Leeds-Liverpool Canal. We swung round the first bend to greet another broadside, although they fired too soon, for we were still some distance away. There was only one tactic left. Brute force and butchery. I handed Nick the monkey wrench - he would clear the bridges while I took the Deva through at full speed (5 knots). Bravely Nick set off amidst a hail of stones - one of them struck him and that was it! Nick's temper is a bit variable at the best of times if the pubs aren't open, but with a horrible Claygate oath (which I doubt the Scousers understood) he charged at them brandishing 15 inches of precision steel - it was rather cruel of him (understandable - I believe he's got some Irish blood in him) but a couple of wild swipes sent them running.

We followed the counter-action through. Nick stayed on land and cleared the next few bridges of louts while I took the Deva through. The system was as follows. I would take the Deva up the cut at about half throttle, then suddenly stop engine about fifty yards from the next bridge. The urchins, loaded up with ammunition and hiding behind the bridge parapet, would look up to see what was going on. Then Nick (having sneaked round the back streets) would hurl himself on them and as soon as the monkeywrench made contact, Deva would steam at full speed through the bridge in the confusion. This worked so well that after three bridges the enemy had had enough. We could then settle down to some peaceful ditch crawling.

Our draft was rather worrying. Deva, under power with her mast unstepped and laid along the deck was sitting very low at the stern, thus drawing more than four feet. The Canal, although dredged to more than 4' 6" at its conception had silted up in the last hundred years and was full of rubbish. However, Deva's iron keel didn't seem to mind, so we pushed on slowly to Litherland Bridge to begin the marathon ditch crawl the next day.

On the way it was evident that not many craft had passed that way in recent years. Wherever we passed people stopped work and lined the security fence to watch us pass. One middle-aged man came out of his office exclaiming, "Glory be to God! a boat! I haven't seen one pass for years! God bless you!" (slightly more pious attitude than the first youths to see Deva on the Cut!).

Within an hour we made the Life Bridge and moored for the night. My father came to see us off, before he went back to London. That night we drank to victory and returned at half past eleven with a crate of light ale which we drank with our supper. We kept the bottles for ammunition.

Here endeth the first part of Jon Wainwright's account of Deva's trans-Britain expedition. Part II will start in our next issue. Any who may have had reservations about the gales described so far should have seen Deva in our recent E.C. Race!

1970 WICKFORD, RHODE ISLAND CATBOAT REGATTA

The two o'clock hurricane, alternately loved and feared by Narragansett Bay sailors, came in early on July 25th. By noon on the day of our annual catboat race, the southwesterly had piped up to a reliable twenty knots. The gusts were more impressive. Our start at thirteen hundred was on schedule and dramatic. The cats were storming up and down the line at General Rock with bones in their teeth, but the committee boat was not yet on station when she fired the first warning gun. Ten minutes of frenzy, interrupted by the five-minute boom, allowed the committee to establish the line and gave the cats a time to snarl and spit. At precisely thirteen hundred roughly fifty people and fifty tons of catboats were away. Fourteen or nineteen hungry beasts (the number of entries varies between committee and press tallies) surged forward.

A broad reach from the line to a mark northwest of Conanicut Point light was followed by a long run past Hope Island and her bleak sister, Despair Island. From the leeward turn, it was a four mile beat back to the line. Crews were soaked and skippers nervous. A substantial chop was running. The older, wooden boats had difficulty pointing. The fleet became an extended Indian file, two fiberglass cats and a wooden giant leading. The eldest of the trio in front, 'Sea Hound', a 1911 Crosby with 26 feet overall and a vast sail, snapped her gaff. Dr. Robert C. Ascher of New York, owner and often victorious skipper, was sadly forced to withdraw. The rest of the parade continued.

The finish line was crossed first by Edwin F. Sherman, Jr., also of New York, in his spanking, new fiberglass Marshall 22 footer. Less than a minute later, 'Tabitha', another rather older Marshall 22, took second with, at the risk of some immodesty, your correspondent at the helm. The valiant antiques and some of the fiberglass chargers followed. The last cat across came in about twenty-five minutes after the winner. It had been a grand race. The festivities were to follow.

At Wickford Cove, crews and skippers gathered for drinks, speeches and prizes. A cook-out followed. For the benefit of British readers, a cook-out is a New England ceremony involving the blackening of meat and corn, (maize to you), over charcoal.

The oldest cat in the race was a 1908 veteran; and, she had sailed the longest course to reach Wickford, coming from the North Shore of Massachusetts, pumping bilges all the way. Appropriate prizes were awarded her for longevity and courage. Other prizes were won by the winning and placing wooden and hard-chine boats. Virtually everybody left the cook-out content and exhausted. Sack time came early, but by the next day we were all plotting for the Cuttyhunk to Padanaram race up Buzzards Bay next month. Fanatics are tireless and unswervingly hopeful.

Catboats evolved in the 19th century in southeastern New England waters to serve fishermen and lobstermen who required a seaworthy vessel capable of carrying a bountiful catch, able to clear shoals with centerboard raised and, equally vital, ready to fly home from the fishing grounds off the prevailing southwesterly before the day's harvest spoiled. The classic cat resulted. Beam is roughly half the waterline length, so the working and stowage areas are vast. The overfed beam, appropriately Victorian, also makes for unmatched dryness and stability. The single mast is nearly two feet in circumference, stepped at the bow and held by a headstay. Shrouds and backstays are unnecessary due to the great size and strength of the mast. The boom extends over the transom by about a fifth of the boat's length. The sail is huge and traditionally gaff-rigged. A cat of twenty plus feet carries as much or more sail in square footage as a thirty-foot sloop; and, the cat reaches and runs as fast as her fancy, modern jib-headed sister. The marvel of the catboat is not unqualified. Cats cannot point quite as high as sloops; a flying jibe will make a Christian of the unbeliever. A modest comeback has been made by catboats in recent years due to the genius of builders who have turned to fiberglass construction for those who prefer to be aboard their boats rather than under them scraping and caulking.

Lea E. Williams.

LEA WILLIAMS is one of our American members, and as is obvious, is a lover of catboats. Entrants in the 1966 East Coast Race may remember the modified catboat Puddleduck; now we have Aurora, whom we hope to see in our Solent Race. I feel sure the thanks of all will go to Mr. Williams for his most interesting account, which I hope will encourage members in other areas to send us accounts of their boats and events. Members contemplating sailing over to North America can be sure of a warm welcome from catboat owners there.

 PROOF PHOTOGRAPHS sent out with this Newsletter
 are by:

R. Stratton,
 Studio One,
 High Street,
 Maldon,
 Essex.

Please order prints direct from him.

Colour slides of all boats of which a proof is
 included are also available from Mr. Stratton.

 SEA PIG'S owner would like to thank the anonymous benefactors
 who helped him over the weekend of the Race.

COPYRIGHT Published by the Old Gaffers Association,
 70b Fambridge Road, Maldon, Essex.
 CM9 6AF.