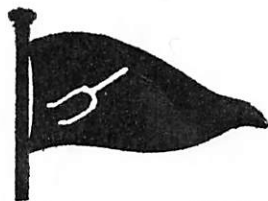
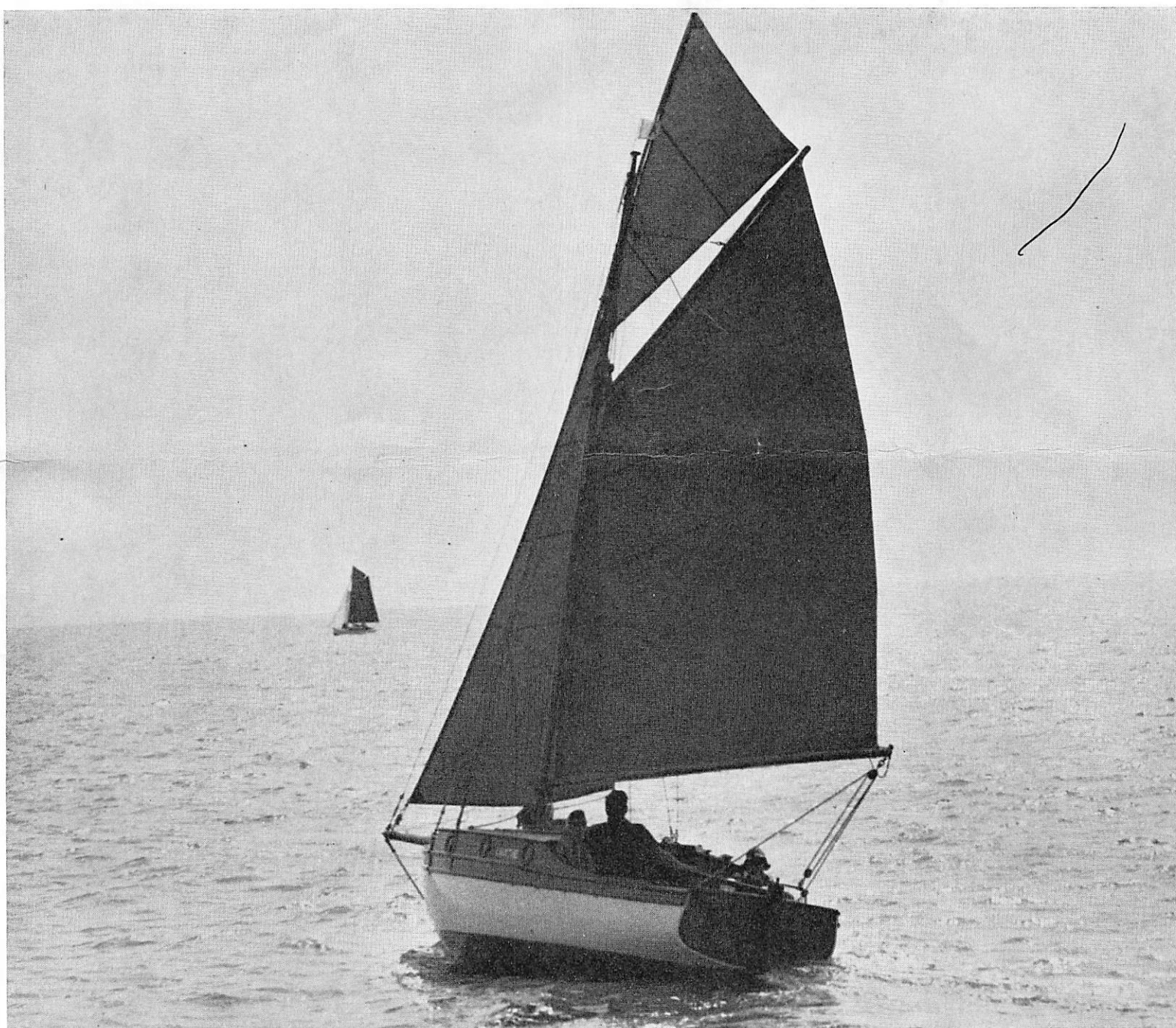


1973/4



Old Gaffers Association

Newsletter



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The Old Gaffers Association

'Braeside' 2 Greenbank St. Galashiels, Selkirkshire,

NEWSLETTER 1973/4.

DIARY DATES

Saturday January 12th 1974. Association Annual General Meeting and Social get-together at The Stag, 15 Bressenden Place, London S.W.1. Bar will be open from 6 p.m. Business meeting at 7.15, buffet meal at approximately 8.15. Supper, inclusive of service and V.A.T. will cost £1.50.

If you intend to come to the A.G.M., will you please send the form on the back page to Michael Millar. The proprietors of the Stag would prefer us to have a meal if we are booking a room for the evening. We have managed to get the room without having to insist that all members attending must pay for a meal (which is often necessary when booking rooms in licensed premises in London) but we shall generate more good will if as many members as possible do try and arrange to attend and partake of the buffet.

Saturday March 23rd. Hardway Winter Rally. Hardway Sailing Club, Gosport, once again are offering us their hospitality and admirable catering facilities for a pre-season get-together. They cannot yet quote us a price for the meal, but promise that it won't be more than inflation plus V.A.T. on top of the £1 that it cost this year!

Please use the booking form on page 3, and note that it should be sent to our newly appointed Area Social Secretary, Peter Barrett, to arrive not later than Monday 18th March. His address is: Yacht Golden Seal, Lymington Yacht Haven, King's Saltern Road, Lymington. If you want to check the cost with him nearer the date, he can be got during office hours on Lymington 3212.

We hope to show some films of Old Gaffers Races during the evening, and if any members have films or slides they would like to show off, please bring them along, advising Peter Barrett what projector will be needed; he might tell you to bring your own!

Saturday July 27th. East Coast Race.

Sunday July 28th. Proposed cruise in company to Amsterdam, followed by race on the IJsselsemeer.

Our usual warm welcome to the following new members:-

A.T. Addis, 98 North End House, Fitzjames Avenue, London W.14.

Dr. F. Argall, 36 Bosvean Gardens, Bosvigo, Truro, Cornwall.
Carn Dhu

David C. Bacon, 81st 7th Avenue, San Francisco, California, U.S.A.
Aida

R.E.E. Bailey, 31 Fosse Way, Nailsea, Bristol.
Minelvia

T.J. Bailey, Bourne Cottage, Wareside, Ware, Herts.
Norseman

2.

- R.W. Bailie, 7 Riccarton Avenue, Paisley, Renfrewshire PA2 6BQ.
Rose of Argyll
- P. Barry, 21 Belgrave Road, Monkstown, Co. Dublin.
St. Patrick
- F.H. Beer, Green Gables, Raridge Lane, Bishops Waltham, Southampton.
Redshank
- J. Bird, 19 Greenfield Avenue, Newcastle on Tyne.
Gighia
- ✓ P.D. Blackman, Free Place, Wellow, Yarmouth, Isle of Wight.
Simba
- David M. Brown, c/o Shell-B.P., P.M.B.2418, 20/21 Marina, Lagos,
Nigeria.
- R.M. Brown, 310 Sansome Street, San Francisco, California, U.S.A.
Kahana
- W. John Buchanan, 5605 Branciforte Drive, Santa Cruz, California
95060, U.S.A. Marie Celine
- G. Carr, 14 Henderson Street, Amble, Northumberland.
Rosemary
- Byron K. Chamberlain, 2535 West Coast Highway, Newport Beach,
California, U.S.A. Revenge
- R. Coleman, 75 Sydenham Street, Whitstable, Kent.
Gamecock
- Robert Counts, P.O. Box 643, Sausalito, California 94965, U.S.A.
Morena
- R. Cowie, Lethington, Shore Road, Kilcreggan, Dunbartonshire G84 0HW.
Lenore
- * R.L. Cundall, c/o Folly Inn, Whippingham, Isle of Wight.
Chough
- T.C. Cunliffe, 64 Ringwood Drive, North Baddesley, Southampton.
Saari
- I.J. Davies, 108 Lanes Avenue, Northfleet, Kent.
Maintopman
- ✓ C.K. Dightam, 24 Hansler Grove, East Molesey, Surrey. KT8 9JW.
Blue Nymph
- T.C. Duggan, 17 Abbey Drive, Glasgow G14 9JZ.
Hildasay
- M. Fishwick, Salisbury House, 30 Monmouth Street, Topsham, Devon.
Temptress
- * P.B. Flutter, Yt. Kirsty, c/o A.H. Moody & Son, Swanwick,
Southampton SO3 7ZL. Kirsty
- Theodore Gaw, P.O. Box 371, Antioch, California 94509, U.S.A.
Grand Turk
- Edward S. Gibson, 152 Stanford Avenue, Mill Valley, California
94941, U.S.A. Stardust
- Dave Gildea, 3139 Avalon Court, Palo Alto, California, U.S.A.
Volunteer
- Harry Graham, 62 Yosemite, Oakland, California 94611, U.S.A.
Orion
- Arthur Humphreys, P.O. Box 612, Sausalito, California, U.S.A.
Cayuga II
- F.J. Jose, 22 Glebeland, Churchston, South Devon.
- John M. Keever, 1040 Marina Drive, Napa, California, U.S.A.
Velero
- ✓ R.M. Kerby, 29 Kelvin Grove, Portchester, Hants.
- * J.R. List, Windhavor, Deacons Boatyard, Bursledon, Hants.
Windhover
- R.A. MacGrouther, Broompark, Cove Dunbartonshire.
Hatasoo
- D. McKerrell, 7 Garvie Avenue, Gourock, Renfrewshire.
Camilla

I. MacRae, 44 Walliscote Road, Weston-Super-Mare, Somerset.

Donald Mibach, 1459 37th Avenue, San Francisco, California 94122,
U.S.A. Amorita

A.G. Moncrieff, 31 Hilltop Close, Rayleigh, Essex.
Shanwood & Wyzita

E. Morgan, 4 Bath Road, Felixstowe, Suffolk.
Glee

Dr. A. Motherwell, Gowanhill, 8 Madeira Street, Greenock,
Renfrewshire. Thistle

Cliff Niederer, P.O. Box 396, Corte Madera, California 94925,
U.S.A. Viator

H.A. Petersen, P.O. Box 6125, San Diego, California, U.S.A.
Marybeth

Dean L. Poore, 1024 Sixth Avenue, Belmont, California 94002,
U.S.A. Sea Witch

P.G. Preston, 24 Stannington Crescent, Totton, Hants.
Nellie

R. Preston, Papplewick Lido, Papplewick, Nottingham.
Kaiki Kalo

P. Raggett, Ty Pen y Banc, Solva, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire.

R. Rawlings, 10 Vincent Grove, Portchester, Hants.

A.G. Riggs, 41 Anberwood Lane, Walnut Creek, California, U.S.A.
Ruby II

Tim V. Rogers, P.O. Box 2782, San Rafael, California, U.S.A.
Orn

A. Rouse, 5 Tyrrel Road, Chandlers Ford, Hants.
Golden Arrow

/continued

BOOKING FORM FOR HARDWAY RALLY

TO BE POSTED TO ARRIVE NOT LATER THAN Monday 18th March 1974.

4.

P.R. Seddon, 8 Holland Street, London W.8.

Victor Segal, P.O. Box 2342, Airport Station, Oakland, California
94614, U.S.A. Java Head

F.H. Simpson, 27 Melville Street, Edinburgh EH3 7JG.
Shireen

J.R. Springer, Court Farm, Dittisham, Dartmouth, S. Devon.
Lily

G.C. Thompson, 46 Maylings Farm Road, Fareham, Hants.
Tango

Louis W. Walker, 263 Glen Drive, Sausalito, California, U.S.A.
Coco II

B.J. Wilkinson, Flat D, 44 Grafton Square, London S.W.4.
Gentle Annie

Jonathan Wilson, Old Eastport Road, Pembroke, Maine 04666, U.S.A.

Ronald J. Wood, 418 Lilac Lane, Rio Linda, California, U.S.A.
Romaine

OLD GAFFERS HEINEKEN RALLY 1974

The O.G.A. has been asked if we would be interested in commercial sponsorship of an Old Gaffers Race. The firm involved is Heineken, the Dutch brewers of lager. A preliminary meeting of five of our senior committee members was held with representatives of the R.Y.A. and of the sponsors, at which a number of points were discussed. However, it was made clear to the sponsors that we felt any proposals should be ratified by our members. Since that date, the proposals have been considered at the East Coast and Solent Area A.G.M.s and have been accepted by them. I hope that at the Association A.G.M., all members present will accept the proposals for the whole Association.

/Continued on page 5

A working party has been set up with representatives of the sponsors, the R.Y.A., and with Michael Millar and Ian Edmond appointed by the central committee to represent the O.G.A.

The proposal is that on Sunday July 28th, the day after the East Coast Race, boats entered in the Rally shall cruise in company from Stone to Amsterdam, where berthing facilities etc. will be available, and also a minibus to the Town centre.

Organised events will start in Amsterdam on the Thursday evening, with briefing for the weekend. Friday will be a day of sightseeing with the crews as guests of the sponsors, and then the Race on the Saturday on the Ijslemeer.

Full details of this event will be circulated to all members in the New Year. It is hoped that this proposed event will attract a considerable number of Solent based boats round to the East Coast Race.

EAST COAST AREA

MINUTES of the Annual General Meeting held at the Maldon Little Ship Club on 3rd November 1973 at 20.20 hours.

The Commodore, Mr. Graham Ling, declined to take the Chair owing to family commitments, so the task was accepted by the Secretary.

1. Apologies for absence were received from the President, Maurice Bailey, and from Mr. Percy Douglas of the Stone Sailing Club. A welcome was extended to Mr. Michael Millar, the Assistant Secretary, and Solent Area Secretary.
2. Minutes of the previous Business Meeting held on Saturday 11th November 1972 were read and signed as a correct record. There were no matters arising but the Secretary pointed out that changes in the Association Rules required the Area to hold a more formal A.G.M., which accounted for the more formal business Agenda.
3. Secretary's Report During the course of the year the Association has been through a difficult phase particularly affecting the East Coast Area in the move of its Secretary to Scotland. My own election as a replacement after a recent change of occupation meant a great deal of help had to be sought.

I am glad to say that the required help was forthcoming, both before, during and after the Race and we all owe a considerable debt of gratitude to the many people who turned to so willingly. Our particular thanks must, of course, go to Stone Sailing Club for again acting as host Club, and therefore taking so great a hand in the success of Race Day. As you will hear we hope for further success next year.

As to other events it is regrettable that the planned rallies were thwarted by the non-appearance of the Newsletters advertising them, in fact we had to circularise our own members for the race, and details of this appear in the treasurer's report.

6.

Finally, may I say that, owing to my position at the time, the work of co-ordinating the Race Day organisation fell largely on the shoulders of your Treasurer, to whom I can only suggest the meeting offer its thanks. (General acclaim.)

On the proposition of Mr. Stock, seconded by Mr. Williamson, the Secretary's report was accepted nem. con.

4. Treasurer's Report The Treasurer presented his report and, after opportunity for discussion this was adopted nem. con.

5. Race Officer's Report The Race Officer offered his thanks to all who helped prior to the day, during the day, and after the race, with special thanks to the Handicapping team and the host club. He hoped that all had enjoyed the day. (General acclaim.)

Some discussion followed and these points were passed to the new Committee for consideration.

Members felt strongly that boat numbers should be retained permanently and the Committee were asked to investigate this, even if the alphabetical list would have to be dropped.

Further pleas were made for the clearer identification of the boats, it still being easy to confuse some craft from the Bridge.

Mr. Millar felt that a finishing limit mark should be established, and the Committee were to examine this.

6. Election of Officers (a) Vice-President Mr. Edmond, from the Chair, pointed out the immense amount of work performed on the Association's behalf at Stone Sailing Club by Mr. Percy Douglas and said that, in view of the indication by Mr. Banyard that he did not wish to continue, as he did not feel he was able to give the affairs of the Association sufficient time, the Association should invite Mr. Douglas to accept the office. (He had already indicated his willingness to serve) There being no other nomination, Mr. Douglas was elected by acclaim. The retiring Vice-President was to be thanked for his past services.

(b) Secretary (Mr. M.D. Millar in the Chair) There being no other nominations Mr. I.S.H. Edmond was re-elected Secretary.

(c) Treasurer There being no other nominations Mr. C.M.H. Edmond was re-elected.

(d) Committee Of the retiring Committee members only Mrs. N. Kennell had indicated that she did not wish to seek re-election. The following were elected:

	Proposer	Seconder
Mr. D. Scurrey	A.C. Stock	General
Mrs. G. Scurrey	A.C. Stock	General
Mr. G. Balmford	Miss A. Phelps	Mr. C. Edmond
Miss A. Phelps	G. Balmford	General
Mr. A.C. Stock	R. Williamson	A. Purnell

(Mr. Graham Ling, as Commodore, is ex-officio a member.)

7. Mandate It was agreed that the existing Mandate required no amendment.

8. The Motion "That the newly elected Committee should be charged with the preparation of an Area Constitution for presentation to the members at the 1974 A.G.M." was put to the members by the Secretary and Treasurer and carried nem. con.

9. Sponsorship 'The Heinekin Rally'. Details of the plan discussed at the steering committee meeting were outlined by the Secretary. The meeting were in general agreement that the Association should proceed with the event, provided that the members were not to be required to use advertising materials on their craft. Queries were raised about boats being transported to Amsterdam, and accommodation for crews and spectators.
10. Any Other Business Thanks were offered to the Maldon Little Ship Club. An appeal was made to members to attend the Association A.G.M. in strength. Mrs. Woodward-Fisher's letter of thanks for her enjoyable time at the prize-giving was read. A letter asking for assistance with a damaged Prawner from a member in Plymouth was read.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 21.45.

SOLENT AREA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The annual general meeting of the Solent Area was held at Emsworth Slipper Sailing Club on Friday, November 9th. The meeting began on a cheerful note, with the Area Vice President, Fred Hillier, announcing that despite previous notice of his intention to resign, he would continue to serve in office for another year, as would the Area Secretary, Michael Millar.

The committee election followed, with the following having agreed to serve: P.W.T. Barrett, R.E. Griffiths, G.E. Hann, J.B. Pot, and C.M. Waddington. P.W.T. Barrett undertook to act as Area Honorary Social Secretary.

Michael Millar presented his Secretary's Report and drew attention to the photographs of the 1973 race which were on display. In this report thanks were expressed to the Association President, Maurice Bailey, and his son Bob; to Elder Gaffer Alec Rangabe and his wife Kate, and to the East Coast Area Secretary, Ian Edmond, for their help on the day of the Race. Financially, the race had not been a success, thanks largely to rising costs, and the meeting agreed that the Association A.G.M. should be asked to instruct the Association Treasurer to write off an amount up to the amount owing from the Solent Area to Main Funds for subscriptions, stock, etc. (£63.36) so as to leave a realistic working balance.

The 1974 social programme was approved in outline, and comprised the following:-

1. Fitting-out supper at Hardway S.C. in March
2. Rally afloat at Newtown during Spring Bank Holiday weekend
3. Rally at Lymington in June
4. Rally at the Folly Inn in July
5. Rally at Hardway or Portchester in August
6. Rally at the Cowes Corinthian Y.C. in September.

In discussion on the 1974 Race it was agreed that the entry fee should be increased to £1.50 with the usual surcharges.

The allocation of standardised race numbers was discussed, and approved in principle, leaving the details to be worked out by the Central Committee. A proposal to allow boats to be accepted with a rig other than gaff rig provided the hulls were built prior to 1939 was defeated. It was pointed out that the

8.

Association was concerned with gaff rig rather than with veteran boats. It was noted that several members present stated that they did not wish to exclude such ancient rigs as lugger or gunter, but primarily to bar Bermudian.

[Editor's note - The policy has always been to include luggers etc., and for Area Race Committees to decide at what point a gunter rigged yacht should be regarded as 'Bermudian with a two part mast' rather than 'high peaked gaff']

The Association Subscription was discussed, and there was some discussion on the production of the Newsletter. The meeting closed with a vote of thanks to the Area Vice President, Fred Hillier, for taking the chair, and to the Emsworth Slipper S.C. for the use of their premises.

WEST COUNTRY GEAR STORE

Richard Songer of: Higher Harrowbridge,
Near Bolventor,
Liskeard,
Cornwall. PL14 6SD.

writes:

'I have been thinking for some time of starting a Gaffers' Gear Store down here in the West. Especially as people seem to have more courage now and are lengthening their bowsprits rather than sawing lumps off them; so spars and mast stumps are hard to find when you need them.

'I would hope that all gear (including odd sails etc.) in the 'come-in-hand' capacity could be brought to the store if it was in danger of being thrown away or deteriorating out of doors.

'If the owner wanted to sell we could put a price label on the item. We could also keep a register of bits and pieces in the West Country that are for sale, such as engines that the owners didn't want to bring to the store.

'The barn we have in mind is 35 ft x 40 ft. which should accommodate most things.

'I have been in touch with Lt. Commander Ivan Graham, and he thinks our imitation of his scheme would be a good idea, and will kindly exchange lists with us when ready, so giving a wide circulation.'

Any suggestions from members in the West would be welcome.

MATTERS FOR THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The following proposals have been received:

'That the Central Committee be charged with the preparation of a revised Constitution for the Old Gaffers Association for presentation at the next General Meeting of the Association'.

'That the Association allocate permanent race numbers to boats participating in its events, and that the Central Committee investigate the means of implementing such allocation.'

The Committee will propose adoption of the Heineken Rally.

As the prime mover behind this year's Clyde Old Gaffers Race, and the owner of a delightful vintage Morecambe Bay Prawner, 'Sam' Poole has to rank as one of our keener members, even though his membership is not of long duration. He has put into writing something a number of us have wondered about for a long time:-

"Before I became bitten with the loveliest bug of all - Traditional Gaff Rigged Boats - I was a keen Vintage Car man. I lived at that time in the United States and it was witnessing the advent of the commercial replica business into the vintage car 'market' that killed the hobby for me.

"The writing is on the wall once again - and this time 'they' are moving into the vintage yachting business. One look at Yachting Monthly (October) will illustrate what I mean. A plastic replica, badly built and badly rigged.

"Now the one thing these commercial boys want is to hang their wares on a respectable peg - in this case the O.G.A. I feel that the Old Gaffers Association should tighten their rules and define very carefully what an Old Gaffer is.

"The Association should decide and define what they mean by an Old Gaffer and should introduce strict rules of membership. If 'replicas' are allowed to be members, then each application should be reviewed by the Committee before acceptance. Glass fibre, cement, etc., should be automatically barred; they can have no relevance to an Old Gaffers Association.

"I have found on the Clyde that members are very much against the idea of modern plastic imitations in what is thought to be a Vintage Yacht race (in fact, as is known, we race with vintage boats of other rigs) the beauty of the day is that it is a gathering of genuine boats displaying their original rigs. Any intrusion of an imitation would destroy the day and in fact the local Committee are indicating that there will be strict rules applied to entrants for the race next year.

"So please can we have a tightening of the rules of membership or at least of the boats registered in the Association, so that the high standards by which the O.G.A. is known world wide at present can be maintained. Then in an age of high powered commercialism we can remain above the power politics of modern 'graft' and just enjoy being traditional and genuine."

A.J. Poole
Hon. Secretary, R.N.S.A.,
Neptune Sailing Club, Faslane.

As the ex-owner of a high aspect ratic Bermudian rigged J.O.G. boat, I would not like to see any restriction placed on membership of the O.G.A., but I agree with Sam Poole that we must look very carefully at this question.

For the moment, my first suggestion would be that it should be left to Race Committees to settle eligibility of boats for entry in the races (within the limits of an overall policy). Secondly, perhaps more emphasis should be given to prizes for the 'over fifties' in the races.

However, we must remember that part of the object of the O.G.A. is to encourage new building on traditional lines, by traditional methods.

I hope there will be discussion on this matter at the A.G.M., but in fairness to the great majority of our members who will not be present at the meeting, I would suggest that this is a matter on which members could air their views via the Newsletter, and on which a firm decision could be taken at the 1975 A.G.M. when all concerned have had a chance to express their opinions.

J.A.S.

THROUGH THE FRENCH CANALS

We have recently returned from a cruise in the French Canals in our 26 ft. smack, during which we passed through over one hundred locks, were left to pass the night in a tunnel, were nearly crushed by a 500 ton barge, survived a Force 8 off Calais and a Force 6 off the Goodwins.

We had decided between the four of us (myself, my wife and my brother and sister-in-law) that the whole of July would be ideal for our cruise. The preceding months saw us buying Michelin maps, Stanfords charts and Philip Bristow's 'Through the French Canals', all of which were studied carefully. One chapter in the book entitled 'suitable and unsuitable boats' listed several gin-palaces as being 'suitable', but when mentioning 'unsuitable' boats categorically stated that traditional craft were unsuitable on the grounds that a) they had too great a draught; and b) that they couldn't be expected to stand up to it!!!

Undeterred by this, we continued to gather the necessary equipment and worked day (and sometimes night) to complete the fitting out of 'Shamwood'.

At this stage it is best that I give a few details of Shamwood. Built approximately 1900, she is a 26 ft.x 9 ft.x 3½ ft. cutter smack, probably from Maldon. When purchased she had two berths and that was it. No lee, galley or rigging to speak of. After fitting out she had four berths in one cabin, a separate lee, a galley and had undergone a complete re-rig, including new mast, gaff, boom, standing rigging and jib.

The 30th June at 11.50 p.m. found us creeping carefully out of Benfleet Creek trying not to bump into anything. Once level with Southend Pier we struck across the Thames Estuary for the North Kent coast. There followed a terrifying two hours with each of us imagining 30,000 ton tankers looming out of the darkness. Dawn found us off Herne Bay Pier, where we confirmed with the crew of an anchored Folkboat that 'that pile of stones over there' was Reculvers. A fix was taken on Reculvers and the pier and off we set for Horse Channel, which we negotiated quite easily. As we motored past Margate, we thought our crossing of the Channel was going to be a very calm affair. This was not to be. As Longnose Buoy receded astern and the North Goodwin Light Vessel grew larger, so did the waves, and the wind grew stronger until it reached Force 6 or so. As we rounded the North Goodwin Light Vessel we took one reef in the main and half furled the foresail on the Wykeham Martin gear. We did this for two reasons, a) In case the weather deteriorated (we didn't want to start reefing operations in really strong winds) and b) Shamwood was suffering from weather helm, and the reef in the main cured this.

We skirted the outside of the Goodwin Sands, picking out the Buoys as we passed them at some considerable speed, until we reached the East Goodwin Light Vessel. During this time I went below to fetch some morale-boosting beer and a scene of utter

devastation met me. One dozen eggs, which had been thrown upwards out of their net pocket had smashed on the carpet, and as I looked forward I could see the cushions in the forecabin lifting off the berths in unison, hitting the deckhead and dropping onto the berths again. This was due entirely to proximity of the Goodwins, which were causing the sea to pile up into a nasty short, steep chop of 5 - 6 feet. We were also close hauled and taking the seas on our starboard bow.

In the distance, on our port quarter, we could see the Folkboat, also reefed, on a course for Ostend, being thrown about by this choppy sea. On the whole, Shamwood took these seas well, but the strain on the bowsprit and gammon iron must have been considerable, because as she buried her head into the base of each wave we were shipping a considerable amount of sea in the jib.

Two hours later, we were becalmed. We started up the engine and motored towards the Sandettie Light Vessel, which was now clearly visible. We took ages to reach it, because by now the tide was on the flood and we were pushing against it. Have you ever had a race with a light vessel and lost? The 10 h.p. Kelvin diesel in Shamwood is capable of pushing her at 6 knots in calm water, and we were in calm water now. It took us two hours, with the engine flat out, to pass the Sandettie. By this time, the Folkboat had given up trying to make Ostend and had joined us on a course for Calais. As they came abeam of us, their crew leapt below and reappeared aiming expensive looking cameras at us.

The rest of the crossing was uneventful, made all the more interesting by the cans of beer tossed to each other across the twenty yards of water between the two craft. The Dyck Light Vessel was not on station and, as Calais hove in sight, the Folkboat's engine gave up, so we towed them into Calais outer harbour, which stank like an Arab's armpit. At high tide, we locked through into the inner yacht marina, tied up and headed for the bar. The first thing that struck us was the lack of Frenchmen! Most of the boats were British, nearly everyone in the bar was English, and you paid for your drinks in Sterling and received Francs in your change.

After a good night's sleep, we set about lowering the mast on Shamwood. I had been informed that the yacht club would store my mast and rigging, free of charge. As the rigging was removed Shamwood started to look more and more naked. So much so that I refused to remove the bowsprit, until one canal veteran informed me that it would surely be broken in the locks.

My brother-in-law and I had made the crossing to Calais from Canvey Island in 17 hours. We had allowed for this, and had allowed one day for de-rigging, stocking up, etc. The following day we collected our respective wives from the Hoverport, and my two sons Marc, 3½ and James, 2.

The next day, armed with our 'Permis de circulation', our Michelin Maps and a full tank of fuel-oil domestique (diesel) we locked out into the outer harbour, passed the car ferry terminal and entered the Canal de Calais. Five minutes after entering the canal we hit trouble! The engine was labouring, the water astern was boiling and yet we were hardly moving. Aground? A consultation with the nearest bargee assured us that we had at least 3 metres of water, so we pulled alongside, where a look at the prop confirmed that it was fouled. After slashing away

in the filthy water with sharp knife for fifteen minutes, I presented the crew with the thickest pair of 'bullet proof' knickers that I have ever seen! So thick, in fact, that our propeller, which is as sharp as a razor, hadn't even cut it! After that we cruised along the canal de Calais down as far as Watten, where the three canals from Gravelines, Dunkirk and Calais meet. Here our prop fouled again -- on a 15 foot length of four inch warp!

A few kilometres further on we reached our first large lock, capable of holding six barges.

The barges in the canals must conform to certain dimensions, which are approximately 120 feet long by 15 feet beam. When empty they weigh 100 tons, and when full 400 - 500 tons. Engines vary from 80 h.p. to 200 h.p. I give this information because of what follows.

As we approached the lock, we waited until all the barges were in and then cautiously edged our way in behind the last barge. Anyone who has handled a smack under engine at very low speeds will know how slowly they answer the helm and how difficult they are to stop. We entered the lock at low tide and looked frantically around the 50 foot slimy walls for something to tie up to! Shamwood was just rolling to a stop 10 feet astern of the last barge, when he gave a quick squirt on his engine to manoeuvre into position. Before you could say 'batelier', we were 10 yards outside the lock again! The prop wash from those things has to be experienced to be believed.

After this lock, and many like it, we turned off the main canal route and entered the St. Quentin Canal, which is punctuated every kilometre or so by a small lock (one vessel at a time). We became quite expert in lock technique after a while, and during all this time had found that, on the whole, both bargees and lock keepers were polite, helpful and pleased to see us. We had feared that we would not be too welcome as the barge traffic in the canals is a major transport medium in France, and the owners of the barges pay quite high rates to use them, whereas pleasure craft may use them free of charge.

We tied up along the bank wherever we pleased, when mooring for the night, and we saw many barges doing the same. We were somewhat alarmed to be woken up, in the early hours of the morning, by the sound of very powerful engines and Shamwood was rocked by the wash of something very large passing. A ship? All was revealed the next day when we passed what must surely be a canal-borne juggernaut. Eight barges (500 tons each) lashed together in twos being pushed by what amounted to a floating engine room at six knots. The pusher unit is a floating tank with two or three 150 h.p. engines, and a bridge on stilts to allow the skipper to see over his charges. We had an extremely nasty incident with one of these things later on.

We met up with a prosperous looking Frenchman in a 40 ft. motor sail ketch which he was taking from Dunkirk down to Cannes. As he eased his craft alongside us to tie up, his crew looked at Shamwood with interest. We in turn inspected his immaculately turned out craft and crew (each of whom was wearing a T shirt with the boat's name across the front). They looked decidedly startled when we informed them that our boat was 70 years old.

We stayed with them for two days, during which time we passed through the Bony Tunnel, which, as its name implies, was built (hacked out?) during Napoleonic times. This tunnel is

18 kilometres long and consists of one long tunnel hacked through the chalk, then a short stretch of canal, then another short tunnel. The procedure for going through is that the vessels tie up to each other in line astern, first the laden barges, then the empty ones, then any miscellaneous craft (us). Then the whole lot are towed through by an electric tug. This takes 5 hours.

By the time we had all tied up and were ready to move off it was 11 o'clock at night. Suddenly, there was a hoot somewhere in the distance - there were 28 barges in front of us - and everyone milled about casting off from the bank and leaping to their helms. We moved off, with Shamwood as tail-end Charlie.

It was a most eerie experience, moving through the tunnel at a walking pace, with the sound of the barges ahead rumbling against the sides of the tunnel. At one a.m. everything went black. Lights out, and we were still moving! Apparently the crew of the tug had decided to knock off for the night! There we were in the bowels of the earth, in total darkness, with the only sound that of water dripping from the roof of the tunnel. Nobody seemed to know at what time we would move off again, so we tied up Shamwood to the side of the tunnel with a piece of string. Sure enough, when we moved off, the string snapped and woke us up, and we again resumed our funereal pace along the Styx!

Finally we reached Paris which was our destination. There we saw, to our amazement, a Maldon Barge! Her name was 'Mayland', and she looked as if she'd been there some time, presumably having come up the Seine from Le Havre, as she still had her mainmast up. As we passed, we could see no sign of life aboard.

We spent ten days in Paris, where Shamwood suffered some damage. We were tied up at the Moorings of the Touring Club de France, by the Pont de Concorde, right in the centre of Paris. Here the river traffic is augmented by the 'bateaux mouches', or tourist boats, which chuck up quite a wash. We were tied up next to a steel cabin cruiser which had a steel rubbing strake as sharp as a knife! Despite eight tyres between us, this rubbing strake fetched us a smart blow on the after rail, separating it from the bulwarks. The bateaux mouches keep running until about midnight, so we suffered many a sleepless night in Paris.

It was in Paris that we saw the only other traditional working craft. A Danish fishing boat of about 35 feet. She had sailed down through Germany, Holland, Belgium and France and looked none the worse for wear.

The journey back was fast, as we knew the way. We had gone about 25 kilometres out of Paris before we realised that we had left our tender tied up to the mooring!

The Bony Tunnel was a repetition of the outward journey, except that we were behind a full barge drawing 8 feet. The clearance between him and the tunnel sides is only about a foot, and the suction of his displacement sucked us into the back of him with terrific force, before we could start the engine. I had to tow two 3 gallon buckets astern and drop back 100 feet before we were safe. As before, we were marooned overnight in total blackness.

The locks on the return were easier, because we entered them at high tide and were lowered, and by this time we were quite skilful in lock procedure. Our last 'frightener' was in the large lock, which we shared this time with a 'pusher barge'

who filled the whole length of the lock and left room for one row of barges alongside. We were first into the lock after the pusher and tied up to his front barge. Two more barges came in astern of us. As the water level dropped, we noticed that the side of the lock was getting closer and closer, until we were only two feet from it. It was then that it dawned on us that the pusher was only tied up at the stern of the last barge, and that he was trying to keep straight by putting his helm hard over and his engines on half ahead! We sat there, powerless to do anything about it as this monster threatened to crush us between itself and the now towering lock side. Suddenly there was a sickening crunch from astern, and we saw that the barge astern of us had been wedged between the wall and the pusher. If he hadn't been there we would have surely been crushed, as he was much wider than us. Needless to say, as soon as the lock gate was raised, we shot out of there like all the Russian Navy was at our heels!

When we returned to Calais Yacht Club, we found that the cruising season had arrived in earnest. The yacht marina was packed and nearly all the boats flew the red ensign (or the blue). There were some very large and expensive yachts in there and we felt a little self-conscious as we brought our very travel stained and bruised Shamwood into a berth, without rigging and festooned with ugly black car tyres.

Our misgivings soon turned to pride when we walked to the Club House. We walked past a large, immaculate 'Morning Cloud' type ocean racer. The crew, (again wearing T shirts with the yacht's name) were sitting in the cockpit drinking beer and chatting. As we walked past I heard one of them say:

'Did you see that smack come in?'

'No, where?' was the unanimous reply.

'Over there, let's go and have a look'.

Immediately there was a mass exodus to go and look at Shamwood. On several other occasions, crews and skippers of other craft came on board to have a look around, especially after we had the mast and rigging up again. Which shows that despite modern technology in today's craft, people's hearts are still in the right place.

Our return to England in Shamwood got off to a bad start. After several days of gales we decided to have a go. This might sound rash and foolhardy at first but our thinking was sound.

Firstly, the women and children had returned to Dover by Hovercraft. Secondly, although the forecasts were Force 8+ and 3 - 4 metre waves, the Varne Light Vessel had been reporting Force 4 for the last few days. It was logical to assume therefore, that the Varne must be in shelter. Finally, we noticed that the gales died out during the nights and did not spring up again until about 8 or 9 o'clock the next morning. We reasoned, therefore, that if we left very early, we could reach the Varne area before the gales arrived.

However, this was not to be. We left Calais at 7 a.m. - much too late. We were fully reefed, sailing under jib and fully reefed main only. We were accompanied by two modern 35 footers, one Belgian and one French. As soon as we cleared the shelter of Calais, the full force of a Force 7 hit us. It was then that the windward ability of Bermudian rig showed itself. The two yachts headed straight at Dover, whereas we could only get as close as a course which would have taken us to the East Goodwin! After about four miles, the wind freshened to a full Force 8 and we started encountering those 3 - 4 metre waves that the meteorological office had mentioned. We were taking them on our port side and,

when they broke over us, Shamwood started corkscrewing wildly. Eventually we cried 'uncle' and turned head up into the wind, dropped the main and jib and half unfurled the staysail to steady her. While we were doing this Shamwood was being swept by every wave. We got slightly wet! Then we turned back to Calais with the engine taking us as fast as it could! By the time we reached Calais again, our two foreign companions were almost out of sight. A while later they too came back into Calais looking very sorry for themselves.

We left Shamwood at Calais for one week, returning the following weekend to sail her back.

This time we motored across in flat calm! The calm weather lasted until we reached Margate, when it freshened to force 3 or 4, so we could at last sail. As we got further up towards Whitstable so the wind freshened until we were in a force 5 to 6. (Force 6 was forecast.) As there was no sea running, we kept everything up and we really started to move. We passed a Caprice Sloop, which was really pitching, whereas we, with our long keel and weight were sailing without any severe motion.

Finally, we again had a nerve wracking hour or so dodging shipping (real this time) in the Thames Estuary at night. As we arrived home at low tide, we picked up a mooring off Southend Pier, and waited for the tide before sailing up Benfleet Creek to pick up our own mooring.

To summarise, I would mention that a) Shamwood is the first largish craft I have ever owned, b) none of us had ever sailed across the Channel before, c) I would recommend the French canals - in a craft which is manoeuvrable - to anyone, d) our draft at no time proved a handicap, and e) I just can't wait to do another cross-Channel trip in Shamwood.

Alastair Moncrieff.

WANTED Terylene Gaff Mainsail. Luff 10'6", Foot 14', Head 11'6" Leach 19'6".

John Hill, Allport House, Allport Road, Cannock, Staffordshire.
Tel: Cannock 2186.

N.B. This booking slip to be sent to Mr. M.D. Millar,
107 Baker Street, London W1M 1FE, by January 5th 1974.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

At The Stag, 15 Bressenden Place, London S.W.1., on
Saturday, January 12th, 1974.

Please book for me suppers for people, at £1.50 each.

I enclose cheque/postal order for

NAME

ADDRESS

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FOR SALE

ZISKA Morecambe Bay Prawner, 7 tons. 36'6" x 12' x 4'9".
Built 1903 by Crossfield of Arneside. Coventry Victor horizontally opposed twin petrol engine. Calor gas lighting & oven.

Though in very good condition earlier this year, broke loose and drifted during gale and suffered damage as follows: Bowsprit broken at stem; Main boom broken 5' from stern; Counter stern damaged above water line; Samson post and side planks damaged on port bow; Gunwhales distorted and handrailing damaged; Engine waterlogged; Side rubbed; Hull sound below waterline.

Fine old craft with hand carved tiller, very fast. Owner unfortunately uninsured and cannot meet expense of repairs, would sell for £950.

T.J. Godfrey, 43 Meredith Road, Peverell, Plymouth, Devon.
Tel: Plymouth 772537.

BRIES 1916 Amsterdam Boeier Aak leeboard yacht, iron, powered by Perkins 6 cyl. engine, giving 6 knots. 50' x 48' x 16'6" x 4'6". Sleeps 8 comfortably. RT, echo sounder, 2 tenders, outboard motor. Cruised extensively in English Channel, well known competitor in Solent Area O.G.A. races. Lying Chichester Harbour. £8,500 o.n.o.

For appointment to view, please ring Mrs. Ellis, Emsworth 5111 during working hours.

To round off this issue I would like to wish members a happy Christmas and the best of sailing in 1974. J.A.S.

COVER PICTURE LIANTHE 22 ft. sloop built by Charles Wiggins at Great Wakering in 1934, and now owned by K.S. Munnion of Maldon. The first winner of the new OLD HARRY TROPHY in the East Coast Race. From a photograph by L.H.A. Weigall, taken in 1969.

BOOKING FORM FOR O.G.A. SUPPER

SEE OVER.

PLEASE SEND TO MICHAEL MILLAR