



OLD GAFFERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER No. 1966/2

We begin this issue with an extra special welcome to three honorary members, Monsieur Claude Tissier, Commodore of the Societe des Regates du Havre, his wife Odette, and their son Yann. Those members who met M. Tissier at Le Havre will know what a real pleasure it is for us to have them as members.

We also welcome the following new members:-

- M. Baquiast, 72 bis rue de Paris, 92 Meudon, France
Sauris Grise
- J. Blanken, 28, Rue Jean-Jaques Rousseau, 29-S Audierne, France
Canada
- J. E. Gillett, 16, The Moat, Traps Lane, New Malden, Surrey
Penguin
- J. C. Grossin, 8, Rue Gambetta, 29-S Audierne, France
Monteno
- J. C. Jarvis, 35, Muswell Hill Rd., London, N10
Twinkler
- J. V. W. Lodge, 3, Sickie Rd., Haslemere, Surrey
- L. M. Manton, 173, Suffolk Crescent, Maldon, Essex
- C. Paulay, 29, Rue des Capucins, Honfleur 14, France
Nanette II
- G Peers, 22, Abbey Drive East, Grimsby, Lincs.
Gipsy
- N. Topping, 24, Mansell Road, Wimbledon, London S.W.19
- M. A. Trueman, 21, Anyards Rd., Cobham, Surrey
Tartar Maid

It is with great regret that I have to record the death of J. W. S. (Bill) Coe, owner of Pembeth, on November 30th last, following a heart attack. Mr. Coe began his yachting in 1931 when he had a converted lifeboat called 'Elizabeth Anne' with an old taxi cab engine for an auxiliary. In 1934 he bought Pembeth - then The Clyde - from two Whitstable oyster fishermen. At that time the 16 ton boat, built by Aldous of Brightlingsea in 1912, was fully rigged and her auxiliary consisted of two very large sweeps! Mr. Coe sailed her like that and gradually converted her and added an iron topsail. The war put a stop to his yachting temporarily, but since then Bill Coe had become widely known and well liked as a cruising yachtsman and in particular as a helper of others in difficulties. He was a founder member of the O.G.A., and sailed Pembeth in the 1963 and 65 East Coast Races. His son, M. J. S. Coe, is continuing to sail Pembeth, and has already entered this year's race.

BADGES Broach pin lapel badges (O.G.A. Burgee) 1 1/2" long are now available at 5/- each. We have a stock of ties ordered, but these have not yet been made.

RACES This issue ends with details of the East Coast Race on July 16th, and contains a race entry form. Would Solent area members please note that that form is also for their race on Sept. 10th. Members entering both events can collect a second form at the E.C. Race. East Coast members please note the new race entry fee. PLEASE ENTER EARLY.

FINANCE IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

It was recently decided not to increase the subscription from the very low level of 10/-, as for some time at least that would cover all running expenses. It was agreed that if we needed money for the purchase of stock etc. we would raise loans, and many members guaranteed to lend money if required. So far it has not been necessary to borrow, and if the sale of lapel badges continues it looks as if our finances will cope quite adequately with the normal running of the Association, the races, and the purchases of stock. We are able to run on such a low subscription because we own no property, and pay no rents, rates, lighting, heating, wages etc.

However, my typewriter - a contemporary of most of our boats - is failing fast, and I have to keep it going by increasingly frequent repairs. Only an expensive thorough overhaul and replacement of several parts can save it from its rightful place - the scrap heap.

If we have to get our typing done outside, production of Newsletters and Race Programmes will be made both difficult and expensive, and those of you who have had the misfortune to receive a handwritten letter from me will realise what a strain the lack of a typewriter will place on the general running of the Association.

Repayment of a loan to cover either the repair of this machine or the purchase of a new one would seriously embarrass our finances. We could easily raise sufficient money if we doubled the subscription, but then such an increase would be effective for all future years.

WE HAVE THEREFORE DECIDED TO ASK ALL MEMBERS IF THEY WOULD PAY AN EXTRA TEN SHILLINGS FOR THIS YEAR ONLY, to enable us to purchase a machine, and in future we propose to ask all new members for a ten shilling entrance fee to set up a capital fund in case any similar purchases become necessary.

From your letters, I know that most of you do appreciate the Newsletters. Here is a chance to show your appreciation in a practical way by responding promptly to this appeal so we can buy a new machine as soon as possible. Contributions need not be limited to ten shillings.

If there is a good response to this appeal, it seems likely that we could purchase a duplicator as well as a typewriter, which would greatly reduce our running costs, ensuring the adequacy of the 10/- subscription for many years to come, and possibly enabling us to publish more and bigger Newsletters. I feel sure you will not fail the Association in its need. J.A.S.

WHITSUN RALLY AT LE HAVRE This event turned out to be a great success, with 11 of our boats moored in the harbour and a very merry crowd at the dinner at the Societe des Regates du Havre on the Sunday evening. Fred Hillier's organisation was first class; our reception by M. Tissier left nothing to be desired; and personal meetings with our French members proved very pleasant, and have put the French area of the O.G.A. on a firm footing.

The East Coast contingent were to have set out on the Thursday, but it is believed that C.N.Davies was unable to raise a crew for Lora, and Arthur Hall and your Secretary were unable to raise Cutlass's anchor from a mass of chain on the bed of the Medway. After spending more than half the night struggling we had to abandon the attempt, and as the idea of cutting the chain and sailing with only the kedge did not appeal, I returned to London to contact Michael Millar, who kindly offered to get me over in Qu ver if nothing turned up meanwhile. However, on arrival at Birdham, we found John Gillett had a spare berth aboard Penguin.

Penguin and Quiver left Birdham at 6, making the rendezvous at the Nab just after 8, meeting Patsy and Amelia Jane. Guiding Star was a few minutes later at the Nab. Guiding Star was crewed by cadets from the Mons Officer Cadet School, of which Jack Glennie is C.O., with Colin Glennie, a midshipman from H.M.S. Ashanti as mate. At the Nab they found they had no

charts of the area, so they navigated by the directions in Fred's circular, making a perfect landfall.

D.J.Barlow had saile over the day before with Sea Wigeon, enjoying better weather than the Friday evening contingent. Chris Green with Isis led the main body of the fleet over, with Romilda in the rear, and A.A.Muirheads big ketch Melmore some two hours later. Near the Nab, Melmore's helmsman noticed a slight glow ahead, and on taking avoiding action, Melmore overtook a cruising cat which was showing no stern light. As this is far from the only record of a gaffer overtaking a cat in what should be good conditions for catamarans, one can not help wondering whether cats are all they are cracked up to be. After this incident, Malmore made a very good passage, taking twelve hours from the Nab.

All boats enjoyed pleasant conditions until after midnight, when the wind veered and freshened. Most boats had to take in some sail, and Romilda dropped back after having to motor into the wind to reef, and Patsy lost quite a lot of time when a jib sheet broke. Penguin, Quiver and Guiding Star kept fairly well together until about 4 a.m., when Penguin, with one man very sick, two not feeling at their best, and the helmsman distracted by the sight of his spare clothing floating in a couple of inches of water dropped back. (It is believed this bilge water had leaked back through the pump, the outlet of which was under water most of the time). It seems from talks at Le Havre that most crews were affected by seasickness to some extent. Even some of the 'hardly ever sick' brigade were affected, but no crew was entirely incapacitated at any time, and all seemed in good spirits on arrival at Le Havre.

As later arrivals entered Le Havre they were greeted by the sight of John Clarke drying out aboard the new Maresca (Emu. Cutter, ex St. Barbara) at the first buoy, cheerfully flying upside down the burgee he himself designed! Quite a gaffe as John himself remarked at the dinner on the Sunday! The cloudy weather did not extend as far south as Le Havre so we were escorted into the inner harbour by the S.R.H. launches in perfect weather. Spaces had been saved for us by the pontoon, and our fleet of boats made a wonderful sight with their gleaming bowsprits. One tro was composed of Guiding Star, Isis, Wendy May, Amelia Jane, Quiver and Patsy, whilst astern of them lay Penguin and Romilda, with Sea Wigeon, Melmore and Maresca lying on buoys elsewhere.

Once cleaned up and wet gear hung out to dry, and well fed, the business of sightseeing and ship visiting began. Jack Glennie's barrel of scrumpy, permanently lashed in Guiding Star's foc'sle proved to be in good order. Three of the French members introduced themselves, and some fine parties were soon in swing both on the boats and in the S.R.H.Clubhouse.

A brief interval for sleep, and the festivities continued on the Sunday. Attempts to discover how all the boats had fared and compose a complete story for this Newsletter were well and truly foiled by the festive and alcoholic spirits to be found on all boats. The day culminated in the champagne party and dinner at the Societe des Regates du Havre, after which M.Tissier formally welcomed the O.G.A. to Le Havre and presented Fred Hillier with a commemorative plate. In reply, Fred presented M.Tissier with our burgee, and John Clarke presented Madame Tissier with a broach.

Some of the boats had to set out for the return voyage directly after the party, and others left through the Monday, leaving your scribe to enjoy the hospitality of the French members for a further day.

It is hoped that this visit will be only the first of many such, and all gaffers can be certain of a very warm welcome from M. Tissier at the Societe des Regates du Havre, and as the French membership grows, it should be possible for members to arrange to meet kindred spirits in French ports, which, as I found out, will greatly increase the enjoyment of their visits. I will be pleased to put any members visiting France in contact with the French members.

It has also been suggested that French members might visit England to crew with members in the Solent or East Coast races if they can not bring their own boats to these events. Here again I would be very happy to arrange any necessary introductions, and incidentally, how about some Solent members coming up to the East Coast, and vice versa ? J.A.S.

MORE NEWS FROM SIRIUS IN St.LUCIA We've been very lucky in obtaining work on various yachts that come in here and have been busy making bowsprits, skylights, hatches, etc. The money isn't fantastic, but it's enabling us to save a bit so as to travel further. Most weekends we go sailing, either on ours or other peoples yachts. There are so many small bays and coves here within a couple of hours sailing. We usually anchor fairly close to the shore, as the bottom shelves very steeply, and then go swimming and exploring. We never took underwater swimming very seriously in England, but out here with the water so warm we do quite a bit and find it fascinating. Hans and Lottie have nothing on us!

The next thing of course is to repaint and varnish the good ship Sirius. For some reason everything out here rusts incredibly quickly. The worst rust is from our chainplates, which we weren't troubled with in England. It is impossible to get anything galvanised here, so we are going to put zinc pads under them for an experiment and see if it works.

A few days ago we had a most unexpected visitor. He was a Mr. James Abson, who came alongside and said "I used to own this boat 25 years ago!" As you can imagine we were quite excited because 25 years ago she was owned by a doctor, dentist and a solicitor, who we had been told had all been lost in the last war. Anyway, this was the solicitor. He and his brothers are very much alive and kicking. We had also been told that our mainsail had been made in 1938 and fitted by these brothers. You'll never believe this, but it is the original mainsail put on her in 1893!! To make it more of a coincidence, James proposed to his wife aboard Sirius, and they spent their honeymoon in her, and this holiday in these islands is their 25th wedding anniversary celebration! Anyway, we can now tell you the full history of Sirius.

Sirius was built by Thomas of Falmouth in 1893 for a Dr. Bryant, who specified that her planking must be of pitch pine seasoned for 100 years! Thomas therefore got her planks from the spars of old galleons lying in Falmouth, some of which had been in the battle of Trafalgar. The doctor kept her at Tenby for a number of years, but then there was some tragedy concerning his wife - nothing to do with the boat - and he stored away all the gear and Sirius just lay on her moorings for year after year. Eventually Dr. Bryant GAVE her to the three brothers Abson, on condition that they brought her back to her original condition, as by then she was pretty rough. The original suit of sails went with her. Hand sewn Ratsey, of tan flax, of which we have the main and staysail. The brothers put in new masts and a new deck, and in August 1939 completed fitting her out for a world cruise. They sailed her to Liverpool, and as they stepped ashore, they were handed their call-up papers. Imagine their disappointment!

Sirius was towed to Witney Flash, which I believe is a lake on the River Weaver, and there she lay all through the war. When the brothers got home, they were too busy bringing up their families, buying homes, and starting businesses to have time for Sirius. One night there was a freak storm, the Weaver rose 12½ feet, and when the water receded, she was lying on her side in the middle of a ploughed field, fifty yards from the water's edge! The brothers were in quite a spot, and eventually sold her to a Mr. Morrison for £300! It is not quite plain how he eventually refloated her, but I believe someone smiled sideways at her, because there was another flood which brought her within five yards of the river, and cranes did the rest. Anyway, this chap used her solely for a houseboat

until Les Bradford bought her for about £250 in 1950.

Les kept her in the Menai Straits in Summer, and in Walton Dock in winter. Her sails were stored in the power station of which he is manager and so kept beautifully dry. He renewed the masts. The mizzen came out of a local Nobby, and the main came out of a sailing barge. It must have been gigantic originally, because Les cut it to square first, and it now has a 10" diameter.

One day a dredger got out of control in the dock where Sirius lay, and she was hit. Les was then able to renew the deck, double up on all the frames and put new frames in the saloon. All on the insurance, so good timber was used. He also replaced the tiller steering with the present wheel, and the self draining cockpit was also changed. Eventually, he reluctantly decided to sell as most of his crew had emigrated etc., and he couldn't look after his boat and a very old rambling farm house he had bought. We were the lucky buyers! Well, there you have it. James Abson was so excited he could hardly sign the visitors book! When he gets back to England he is going to sort out all his photo's and newspaper cuttings. Apparently he has photo's dating back to 1897.

Our friends will be interested to know that the 'loo' actually is original. It couldn't be anything else really, not of that size and with all those bullrushes and things!

We recently went to Martinique for a couple of days, and stayed four! There we met a most interesting person, John Caldwell and his wife and two boys on board Outward Bound. They have leased an Island in the Grenadines - seems ideal.

Well, friends, you won't be interested in all our drunken orgies, shell collecting, being towed by the local convicts whilst in our dinghy - hair raising stuff, etc. etc. All I can say is it's a jolly good job we're poor or we'd all be alcoholics by now! Pedro is still with us, by the way, but that's another story. Best wishes and smooth sailing to you all

Steve and Sue Keefe.

And very many thanks to Steve and Sue for adding such alive interest to our newsletters. Hope we shall hear much more from them.

FOR SALE 21 ton gaff yawl Klang II, Off. No. 146391. 40ft x 11'6" x 5'9". Built by Thomas of Plymouth in 1924, of pitch pine on oak, with iron keel. Copper fastened, teak joinery throughout. Has had only three owners. 7-8 berths; full headroom throughout. 3-4 berths forward, 2 in main saloon, and 2 in aft cabin. Centre companion way to Stbd. with toilet compt. to Port. Solid fuel stove in saloon. Gas cooker in galley, (new) and new sink with formica surround. 90 HP Chrysler Crown petrol engine recently overhauled. Electric and paraffin lighting. All gear. Avon dinghy. A first class cruising yacht or floating home. Excellent seaboard, but not slow. Offered completely fitted out and ready for sea at £3,000 o.n.o. Lying Aldeburgh. J.P. Robinson, Rose Cottage, Snelston, Ashbourne, Derbyshire.

S'il y a des membres Français intéressés d'une visite à L'Angleterre, je sera hereuse à faire quelles choses je peut. C'est possible qu'il sera des vacances dans les équipages des bataeux anglais en la course East Coast Old Gaffers.

Maldon est à peu pres de 65 Km. de Londres. On prend le train à Chelmsford de la gare Liverpool Street (Londres) et à Chelmsford on prend l'autobus numero 31 de L'arrêtation de l'autobus en dehors de la gare. Nous serons très hereuse a voir quelque membre Français qui peut nous visiter pour cette occasion.

EAST COAST RACE SATURDAY, JULY 16th.

START 12-30 p.m., The Pier, Osea Island, River Blackwater.

COURSE Wallett Spitway, Priory Spit, Knoll, Bar, Finish in River Colne.

Full details of starting line and courses will be in the sailing instructions/souvenir programme sent to members a few days before the race.

ENTRY FEE ONE POUND (£1) for O.G.A. members 30/- for non members.

BUFFET SUPPER AND PRIZEGIVING at Jacobs's Hall (fully licensed) High Street, Brightlingsea, starting at 7-30 p.m.
Prizegiving at 8-30 TICKETS TEN SHILLINGS (10/-)

PRIZES The LIFERAFT HIRE COMPANY SILVER CUP FOR SEAMANSHIP awarded to the crew displaying the best seamanship.

The EAST COAST OLD GAFFERS TROPHY awarded annually to the first boat over 50 years old on corrected time.

The TOM BOLTON MEMORIAL CUP awarded annually to the first fishing or ex fishing boat over the finishing line.

THREE PRIZES IN CLASSES ONE AND TWO. Classes divided into under 28ft. L.W.L., and 28ft L.W.L. and above.

HANDICAPPING by R.Y.A. T(H)CF. RACING UNDER R.Y.A. & I.Y.R.U. RULES.

BARGE TRIP FOR SPECTATORS Thanks to the kindness of our Vice President, Capt. R.S. Banyard, a motor barge will be available to carry spectators. The barge will leave Maldon Town Quay at 11 30 a.m. Please be there by 11 a.m. As the barge will not be able to return to Maldon after the race, a coach has been booked for the return journey, leaving Brightlingsea at 9-45 p.m. Special car parking facilities have been arranged in the Marine Parade Car Park at Maldon for the day. The cost of the day out will be £1 per person. (Children 4 to 10 half price, under 4, free) This cost applies to either a place on the barge, or a seat on the coach, or both, and includes the car park charge.

We hope to be able to arrange to supply hot drinks on the barge, but can not supply food, so bring sandwiches, and also be prepared for rain.

Will members wishing to book places on the barge and/or coach please do so on the race entry form, making the necessary alterations to the form. Places are limited by the number of seats on the coach, so please book early.

Members coming on the barge may book supper tickets. Here again, the number is limited, so book early. Preference for supper tickets will be given to boats crews, but after June 29th, supper tickets not already sold will be sold to people coming on the barge, in the order in which applications have been received

PLEASE TRY AND GET ALL RACE ENTRIES IN BY JULY 1st. Later entries will not be refused - in fact we are prepared to take entries on the starting line, but late entries make a lot more work for the organisers, and the details of the boats can not be included in the souvenir programmes.

If there is any demand, we can arrange a passage race to the Medway on Sunday, July 17th.

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