



OLD GAFFERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER No. 1967/3

First, a welcome to the following new members:-

- R. Barber, Red Lyons, Latchingdon, Chelmsford, Essex
Abaca
- C.H. Barnard, 78, Mill Road, Maldon, Essex
Dunlin
- Dr. G.L. Bolt, West Norfolk and Kings Lynn General Hospital,
Kings Lynn, Norfolk
Iolanthe
- Mrs. P.E. Colley, Fourways, West Marden, Chichester, Sussex
Tessa
- W.J. Dean, 14, Waverley Gardens, Grays, Essex
William
- Lt. J.M. Dines, 10, Moody Road, Seagfield Park, Hillhead, Hants.
Katrine
- R. Francis, Astana, Grand Avenue, Camberley, Surrey
Gaivota
- P. Hall, 22, Trinity Church Square, London, S.E.1
Faith
- N. Hennessy, 17, Ferry Lane, Wouldham, Rochester, Kent.
- C. Hughes, 84, Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex
Rose of Pagglesham
- P.M. Jones, 6, St. Michaels Road, Dovercourt, Essex
Pembeth
- A.P.J. Lewis, Flat 4, Pylon Court, Elmstead Rd., Wivenhoe, Essex
Ketura
- R. Loram, Bridge House, 13, Church Road, Burnham, Essex
Andromeda
- R.R. Peters, 6, Gosfield Road, High Garret, Braintree, Essex
Reginald the Dane
- W.J. Quill, Dolphins, Little Baddow, Essex
Phantom
- J.H. Register, 34, High Street, Littleport, Ely, Cambridge.
Rover
- G. Ingram Smith, Five Winds, Bromeswell, Woodbridge, Suffolk
L'Atalanta
- J. Struth, Fralenzi Marlu, Tinnocks Lane, Stone, Southminster,
Essex
Stephanne
- R. Toogood, Clownstown, Sleepers Hill, Winchester, Hants.
Nautilus
- J. Wheble, Moorlands, St. Helens, Isle of Wight.
Theresa
- C.R. Williamson, 26, Downs Road, Maldon, Essex
Mary
- B. Winterton, 88, Thornton Road, Cambridge.
Plover

COMING EVENTS

August 12th. Rally at Shotley - completely informal - Anchor on the Shotley shore just in the mouth of the River Orwell, and meet any other gaffers who happen to be in the area. Good anchorage (or so I'm told) and pub nearby.

Saturday, September 16th. SOLENT AREA RACE Start at 1030 a.m. at Coronation Buoy. Race entry fee £1 for O.G.A. members; 30/- for non members. Late entries after September 6th 35/-. Boat histories for the programme need revising; please send them in early.

Rally at R.A.F.Y.C. after at approx 1900 hrs. Cost for buffet supper 12/6 per head to be sent with race entry fee.

Please send Solent Race entries direct to Area Secretary,
Mr. W.D.Robinson, Afzelia, 8, The Rookery, Emsworth, Hants.

POSTAL CODES Would members who have postal codes for their addresses please let me have them as soon as possible. J.A.S.

SELF STEERING A request has been received from a member who would like to see some discussion in the Newsletters on the merits of various methods of self steering gaffers.

ACCOUNTS The publication of the Association's accounts has been delayed by the auditors appointed being unable to deal with the job. The accounts have now been placed with another firm, and it is hoped to have them available for publication in the next issue.

FOR SALE

Henrietta - auxiliary gaff cutter fitted with leeboards. Ex ships lifeboat. 4 Berths. £500
P.F.Dan, 41, High Street, Wivenhoe, Essex

Gairloch 10 ton C/B gaff cutter. 30' x 9'6" x 3'3". Maurice Griffiths design built in 1931 by J. Miller. Larch on oak with teak trim. 4 Berths, separate toilet; Perkins 4.99 diesel. 2 suits of sails and much extra gear. Comfortable cruiser. 3rd in Solent Old Gaffers Race in 1966. Asking £1,400, but special rate to active O.G.A. member.
Dr. P.W.Clements, 20, Harbour View Road, Parkestone, Poole.

To all mariners desirous of purchasing a fine vessel;- The ODD TIMES is shortly to be offered for sale. This well known vessel of 6 Tons T.M., 23'6" L.O.A., 22' L.W.L., 8'3" Beam 3'9" draft is now in Nova Scotia, ahving recently voyaged from Essex to the Canary Islands, Spanish Main, The Old Colonies, New England, Etc. She will, God willing, arrive back in England in August (Cornwall), and then cruise up the Channel to her home port of Colchester, where she is due in the latter half of September.

The ODD TIMES was very stoutly built of the finest material by Wm. Wyatt and Sons of West Mersea in 1958 to a design by John Leather. Purchased by her present owner in 1961 she was excellently fitted for deep sea cruising, and being Cascover sheathed she is impervious to the dreaded worm. Equipped with a diesel engine (Petter), electric lights, echo sounder, direction finder and other navigational appurtenances, and comfortably fitted out for two persons, including a water closet of ingenious design, this exceptional craft has, in addition to her present commission, cruised to and from the Levant and extensively round all British coasts.

The ODD TIMES will be offered for immediate sale at the end of September for the sum of TWO THOUSAND GUINEAS, and interested parties desirous of purchasing this outstanding craft, for cruising in times of peace or as a privateer in time of war, should write to;-

Mr. Peter C. Rose, c/o Mrs. D. Winter,
Gouldens, 40, Chancery Lane, London W.C.2

WHITSUN RALLY This was a distinct flop. Arthur Hall took Cutlass over early, after waiting nearly half a week for the weather to ease off a trifle, and had a somewhat hair raising passage. Only S.G.Bishop with Betty II managed to join him from the East Coast, but D.J.Barlow sailed his little Sea Widgeon up from the Solent area. Arthur, accustomed to his 47ft ketch, can find no words of praise enough to describe Sea Widgeon's passage, and from the bumpy ride we had on Saari out to the middle of the North Sea and back, conditions must have been far from pleasant in so small a boat. Congratulations to Mr. Barlow on a very fine voyage indeed.

The return voyage was a very different story, at least for Cutlass, who on leaving Ostend ran right into a roaring flat calm and in twelve hours moved one mile nearer Ostend, returning to the Medway a day and a half late.

EAST COAST RACE Any disappointment over the Shitsun rally was more than made up for by the success of the East Coast Race.

The primary factor contributing to this success was the magnificent co-operation we received from our new hosts, Stone Sailing Club. In fact I felt quite ashamed of the O.G.A. on the bridge, where the S.S.C. personnel outnumbered the O.G.A. by four to one - a balance slightly redressed by the presence in the sun lounge below of Tom Cook and his assistant, of whom more anon, working out the corrected times. Haven't we got any non boat owning members who would like a grandstand view of the race in return for some help with the far from onerous tasks of spotting, timekeeping etc.? Can't we get a team from the Solent Area to help with the E.C.Race, in return for corresponding help with the Solent event?

Stone really laid on the V.I.P. treatment for us. They had their bar open for us on the Friday evening, but due to the somewhat fickle winds several of the boats from further afield were later in arriving than they had anticipated. Even so, there was quite a pleasant crowd round the bar. This pre-race get together is a new thing for us, and it is to be hoped it will grow in popularity over the years.

Saturday turned out to be fairly sunny, and the weather forecast was F.4, West South West, so the full course was set, and the Class 3 owners all agreed they would like to go the whole way. By 9 a.m., when the time signal was given, the sight from the bridge was indeed memorable. 55 of the 56 entrants had turned up, and were setting sail, recovering anchors, or sailing round. The wind was not up to the forecast strength, so all the light weather kites were being prepared. Some of those who had spent the night below the line, and not moved up on the flood were having a hard job beating up against the tide. Off the Tollesbury shore, W.J.Bibby's old East Coast smack Taffy could be seen, struggling up under engine, with the much larger engineless Whitstable smack Stormy Petrel in tow. For a time it looked as if they would be late at the start, but they made it with just time for a quick breather. Faith, Sugar Creek, and William were also beating up from below the line at the 10 minute gun.

On the bridge at the clubhouse the starting team were all assembled - Official starter, the Vice President of S.S.C., Percy Douglas, with the S.S.C. Commodore, Ron Burke as Officer of the Day. With a full set of flag halliards (and signalman), three cannon and bombardier, and a large electric clock and Mrs. Iris MacNab as Timekeeper, we were all set for a first class race, and from the comments heard afterwards, it seems as if that is what we got. The view from the bridge was magnificent; the largest fleet we have ever had all streaming down towards the line, with Faith beating back up on the far side of the river; Iolanthe, who had mistimed recovering her anchor and got swept over the line before the gun, beating up amongst the moored boats on the foreshore; and R.E.Norris, not taking any chances after his very hard struggle to get to the start and keeping Stormy Petrel's anchor down until the gun went so she appeared to be going the opposite way to the rest of the fleet. Faith crossed to the right side of the line about a minute or less before the gun went, and turned to make a perfect start.

The gun went, and off they went - the big ketch, Girl Stella, familiar to those who have entered the Solent Race, in the lead, and looking magnificent with white topsails setting over tan main and mizzen, then the 36ft ketch Vivette II - a newcomer to the event, and a fine sight in a cloud of billowing white.

After these two, the fleet was too thick to distinguish individual boats. Four Sisters could be seen somewhere out in front, and Kate, Sugar Creek and what looked like N.J.Mitchell's cutter Vivette were well to the fore.

In the main body of the fleet, odd boats could be identified - the big Pilot Cutter Theodora, entered by the Ocean Youth Club of Brightlingsea, with her jackyard topsail towering over the

smaller boats round her like a swan escorting her cygnets; the 50 foot yawl Duet, also entered by the O.Y.C. and also setting a jackyarder; then about the most impressive of them all the beautifully shaped high topsail of Stormy Petrel. And all the time this lovely fleet was sweeping its way seaward, Iolanthe, the pretty little Blackwater Sloop built by Dan Webb of Maldon for Francis B. Cooke, was struggling to regain the right side of the line. She made it just as the tail enders of the fleet came along, and she was off with them. But what was that on the far side of the river? Far from having made the perfect start we all expected, Faith had found Thirstlet Spit as she gybed, and there she sat for the whole day - only a matter of yards above the line.

The fleet was as well assorted as ever, but made even more interesting by the first really good entry in Class 3. Smallest boat in the race was the dinghy Torment - only 15ft long, but carrying full gaff cutter rig. Then there were the two Shetland Isles 16ft. open boats - true descendants of the Viking longships; Dunlin, the 17ft. Aldeburgh One Design built by Eversons of Woodbridge - a miniature version of their Cherubs; Stephanie - one of those little boats that one sees in most estuaries - a pretty little hull with a minute cabin, with an unknown history stretching back into the murky mists of time; a winkle brig - C.R.Williamson's Mary - the only Class 3 boat setting a topsail; and one of our regular entrants, R.H.P.Young's beautiful Norwegian built Four Sisters. This bigger entry of small boats was nicely balanced by a bigger entry of really big boats. Theodora and Duet were a welcome addition to our usual fleet, then we had Stormy Petrel, Band of Hope, nicely repaired after her mishap in last year's race, Cutlass, Pembeth, Nell, Phantom, - another newcomer - an Aldous smack owned by W.J.Quill. Also new to the East Coast fleet were Girl Stella, now owned by F. Mulville, Vivette II, and the big Whitstable built yawl Katrine. Those of us who saw her out on Barge Match Day on the first of the month very much doubted whether she would make our race - then her hull needed more re-caulking, a full repaint and sundry other not so small touches, and her rigging on Barge Match day could best be described as embryonic. But there she was - a very nice looking gleaming black hull, with varnished cabin and new doghouse, fully rigged, and even setting a mizzen staysail. Her team of owners must have worked very hard indeed to have achieved these results, and from the look of the declaration form they handed in after the race one could assume some of them were still applying paint during the race!

One welcome feature of the race was the increasing number of boats with their names really clearly displayed each side. Pembeth showed that a name painted in enormous letters on the cabin side can be a work of art, and the 16ft. Annie Laurie proudly displayed her name along the shear strake - about all of her above the water anyway (and that only some of the time!) Several owners spent part of the Friday evening with paint pot and brush.

Another pleasing feature of this year's race was the great variety of sails set on the run down. Annie Laurie tried a Hornet's spinnaker with rather mixed results, and most of the two masted boats were setting mizzen staysails. (Why do they call them staysails? - so far as I know they are always set flying!) Dorcis even went so far as to set two sails from the mizzen masthead. Mary set a water sail, presenting a fine sight with some nicely curved headsails. From the photographs to hand it looks as if Duet set a sail from her squaresail yard, and Henrietta, Band of Hope and Taffy joined Mary in trying water sails. Fanny had got hold of a really beautiful spinnaker which looked very well indeed setting high above her new figure head.

This year the fleet did not have to search for the Wallet Spitway Buoy - Col. Marks had taken his bog Hoogaars Reymerswale down there earlier to give a cine photographer a chance to film

the fleet as they rounded the mark. It was very kind of Col. Marks to give up the race himself to assist in the making of this film, and the list of boats round the buoy he handed in after the race helps to fill in the gaps in the full story of the day - a story far too long to publish here.

One declaration form caused considerable amusement - Sugar Creek, the 30ft Colin Archer formerly owned and entered in the race by Mike Peyton has been bought by Chris Doyle, who is fitting her out for extended cruising. She is hardly the type of boat one would expect to be at her best running in light winds, yet Chris's declaration reads -

"11.13 My God in the lead

11.16 Still in the lead

12.36 Duet goes by "

I suspect the last time should read 11.36 though.

The order at the Walleet was more or less what might have been expected, with Duet in the lead, Kate, Nereid II, Stormy Petrel, Patience, Star, Theodora and Vivette II all well up. Fanny, always fast, was most surprised to find the little Annie Laurie keeping company with her for much of the way.

The run out had kept the fleet fairly well together, but the beat back spread them out a bit more. At about half past two we could see gaff sails passing the steamers lower down the estuary, and just before half past three, in they came. Duet, the 50ft. yawl, setting an enormous genoa, four minutes ahead of Theodora. Then came that miniature flier, the 30ft. yawl Nereid II. On a day of such not too heavy winds, it came as quite a surprise to see the 41ft ketch Girl Stella in fourth place over the line, winning the Tom Bolton Cup for her new owner, but the next boat was no surprise - the Pagglesham built smack Kate. This is the third year she has missed the Tom Bolton Cup by one place, but this year she was sailed by the skipper who beat her in the last two years, for Ron Bishop and Russel Pitt have swapped boats. Unfortunately, Bertha was damaged whilst lying at Maldon Quay, so Russel could not enter her. Sixth place provided about the biggest surprise of the race - Fanny - all 22 ft of her, and only just over half an hour after Duet. That little boat certainly can sail! - and she further proved this after the race by leaving Stone at midnight, sailing against the tide to Ipswich, to arrive there at 8-30 - 2 hours before the start of the local club's "Round the Cork L.V.Race", in which Fanny only managed to come second out of twenty one starters - and those starters were not Old Gaffers - most of the were Bermudian rigged boats, some designed for offshore racing.

After Fanny, the finish followed much the pattern expected. Vivette had us worried for a while, as she did not appear to have done at all well, but after the race Mr. Mitchell explained that they had broken the luff wire of their jib and had not had a very good beat up the river. It was a pity to see most of the bigger boats bringing up the rear of the fleet, But Cutlass, Pembeth, Band of Hope and Katrine all need at least twice the wind we had to make them really move. Stormy Petrel had done very well indeed to finish twelfth over the line - especially as most of her crew started the race tired from their efforts to get to the start in time. Her topsail was one of the most beautifully shaped sails in the whole race - a real joy to behold. Wild Duck also did quite well amongst the larger boats. It came as a great surprise to see the Broads built yawl Firefly coming in almost last - so obviously something wrong here, and a check revealed that Jim Clay had been unable to get her to the start in time, so she had merely followed the fleet round.

This year also set a record in the low number of retirements. Spartan, like Faith, had found a mud bank for herself; Torment, the smallest boat in the race, found the going a bit too rough for her below Colne Point, and only the oldest boat in the race, the 110 years old Itchen Ferry Morning Star failed to make it up to Stone before the tide turned and accepted a tow for the last little bit.

RESULTS OF THE 1967 EAST COAST OLD GAFFERS RACE

		Classes 1 & 2					(Start 09 30 00)
FINAL POSN.			CORRECTED TIME		POSN OVER LINE	FINISHING TIME	
			h	m	s		
1	Fanny of Cowes	D.T.Cook	5	33	44	6	15 56 44
2	Nereid II	J.K.Day	5	41	07	3	15 39 53
3	Patience	P.E. Mather	6	05	01	10	16 09 36
4	Bold Hamster	P.J. Bollen	6	06	10	25	16 48 32
5	Bird of Dawning	N. James	6	07	00	8	15 59 00
6	Star	M.P. Miller	6	13	40	14	16 19 14
7	Deirdre	F. Richardson	6	14	08	17	16 32 25
8	Sugar Creek	C. Doyle	6	14	58	7	15 57 58
9	Sea Pig	T. Titheridge	6	16	04	16	16 29 04
10	Deva	J.R. Wainwright	6	18	48	27	16 59 48
11	Vivette II	R. Caiels	6	18	57	9	15 59 57
12	Inanda	P. Ormerod	6	19	18	21	16 47 07
13	New Dawn	R.G. Lord	6	19	33	23	16 52 33
14	Shoal Waters	A.C. Stock	6	20	08	25	16 58 08
15	Reginald the Dane	R.B. Peters	6	21	35	19	16 44 35
16	Kate	R. Bishop	6	24	15	5	15 52 20
17	Ketura	A.P.J. Lewis	6	26	36	24	16 55 36
18	Mary	T.C. Polden	6	30	49	11	16 11 49
19	Girl Stella	F. Mulville	6	34	39	4	15 45 39
20	William	W. Dean	6	35	23	17	16 34 23
21	Iolanthe	G. Bolt	6	35	26	40	17 42 26
22	Duet	Ocean Youth Club	6	36	12	1	15 25 09
23	Sea Minx	A.E. Millett	6	38	58	32	17 13 58
24	Betty	F.R. West	6	42	32	18	16 34 32
25	Clythie	P. Davis	6	43	49	14	16 28 49
26	Vivette	N.J. Mitchell	6	46	32	30	17 08 32
27	Henrietta	P.F. Dan	6	56	37	31	17 13 37
28	Theodora	Ocean Youth Club	6	59	24	2	15 29 23
29	Dorcis	R. Briggs	7	00	27	26	16 59 27
30	Rose of Pagglesham	C. Hughes	7	02	34	41	17 43 34
31	Stormy Petrel	R.E. Norris	7	03	42	12	16 14 42
32	Wind Lady	E.C. Livett	7	06	35	43	17 50 35
33	Wild Duck	C.G. Hull	7	21	38	20	16 44 38
34	Reedbird	D.F. Goodrich	7	23	34	42	17 49 34
35	Abaca	R. Barber	7	24	34	37	17 26 34
36	Taffy	W.J. Bibby	7	32	15	34	17 19 15
37	Glad Times	L.J. Warren	7	46	52	44	18 18 52
38	Nell	J. Bray	7	35	58	29	17 06 58
39	Sunbeam	F.J. Kenry	7	52	29	38	17 41 29
40	Phantom	W.J. Quill	7	53	15	33	17 14 26
41	Katrine	Messrs. Dines	8	02	29	28	17 02 29
42	Cutlass	A.W. Hall	8	15	35	36	17 23 35
43	Sea Fever	R.N. Simper	8	29	40	45	18 45 40
44	Pembeth	P.M. Jones	8	31	08	35	17 20 08
45	Band of Hope	M.W.T. Bailey	8	31	18	39	17 42 18

Retired	Faith	P. Hall
	Spartan	A.T. Goodbourn
	Morning Star	J. Russell
Non starter	Firefly	J.A. Clay

Class 3									
1	Annie Laurie	J.B.Baird Murray	5	22	35	1	16	18	14
2	Four Sisters	R.H.P.Young	5	44	35	2	16	35	41
3	Dunlin	C. Barnard	6	07	23	5	17	14	23
4	Mary	C.R. Williamson	6	11	32	3	16	46	32
5	Stephanne	J. Struth	6	20	34	4	17	13	34
6	The Saith	G. Dunn	6	33	06	6	17	39	06

Retired	Torment	D.W. Cook
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The race was followed by an excellent buffet supper, and then the prizegiving in the lounge at the Stone Sailing Club. Our guest of honour, J.D. Sleightholme, better known to most members as the creator of the greatest of all Old Gaffers, Old Harry, appeared to have thoroughly enjoyed his day out on Cutlass, and before presenting the prizes he reduced us all to helpless laughter in presenting apologies for Old Harry's absence and recalling a somewhat unfortunate incident aboard the gaff schooner Hoshi.

For the third time in five years, Fanny of Cowes took the main trophy - now the East Coast Old Gaffers Trophy; Girl Stella received the Tom Bolton Cup; and Annie Laurie the Zetland Trophy for the first Class 3 boat. In one thing it is a pity that Class 3 has been separated from the rest of the race, as otherwise Annie Laurie would go down in our records as the first boat to beat Fanny in one of our races. David Cook need feel no shame at being beaten by such a determined crew as Annie Laurie's. However, we are far from satisfied that the handicapping formula works properly in matching small open boats with deeper hulled cruisers, although it seems to equate the smaller boats themselves, so Class 3 results are considered separately.

The Lifteraft Hire Company Seamanship Cup was awarded to Vivette II for her sail handling; and Class prizes went in Class 1 to Sugar Creek, Vivette II and Kate; and in Class 2 to Nereid II, Patience, and Bold Hamster. To mark the fifth East Coast Race, a new trophy has been presented, the Cup for Trying, awarded to the boat with the best aggregate over the largest number of races which has not yet won any other prize. This year the cup went to Sea Pig, the Deben Cherub owned by Tom Titheridge, who beat Dr. Margaret Miller's cutter Star by only 12 minutes over the five races.

In addition to starting the race for us, providing a first class team for the finish, and offering us their hospitality for the evening, Stone Sailing Club also provided a very welcome aquatic taxi service with their rescue launches, and took out one of the many cine cameramen to cover the start of the race. Not only were there cameramen aboard Reymerswale, on the bridge at Stone and in the rescue launch, several of the larger boats racing were also carrying photographers, so we are hoping to be able to see a really complete record of the whole event - something to look forward to for the future.

One owner who deserves especial thanks is Maurice Bailey of Band of Hope, who not only took aboard a cameraman, but also took with him the crew of the Solent based Freya II and sundry others who happened to turn up at the last minute hoping to be able to crew for somebody. It was especially nice to have Keith Hudson and his crew from Freya II along to take part in the race, and I hope that in the future we shall see more owners who are unable to enter their boats for another area's event crewing for some of the local owners.

The thanks of all concerned must also go to Mr. Foyster, father of one of the crew aboard Stormy Petrel, who, having come down for the day to watch the race, very kindly helped Tom Cook with the working out of the corrected times - quite a task for the two of them with fifty two times to be calculated and checked.

No words can adequately express our thanks to Stone Sailing Club, and in particular to Mr. Douglas, their Vice President, and it is with great pleasure that I am able to quote from a letter from Mr. Douglas:-

"It is also my pleasant duty to be able to inform you officially that while at this moment obviously we cannot commit future committees to an ad infinitum arrangement, the committee has very willingly agreed to our being able to put on the Old Gaffers Race next year at a date to be decided subject to your

own arrangements, but which is probably to be the second or third week in July, more likely, I suppose, the third week."

And from an earlier letter from Mr. Douglas;-

"I cannot recall when we at Stone have been given so much pleasure in doing what after all was a simple job of work, and never have we had so much appreciation of what we were able to do."

I know many clubs which would not have made us nearly so welcome, and there is a great deal in the way in which "a simple job of work" is done.

And finally, a heartfelt thank you to all members who supported this event and helped to show Stone Sailing Club that we did indeed appreciate their efforts. All in all, it was a great day.

J.A.S.

A sad post script to the story of the race -

Regrettably, there was one case of completely wrong identification, caused by several factors, chief of which was the presence of a 'mystery boat' about which all we knew was that she was 26ft long. Please, all owners, see we do have enough information to be able to identify your boat at a fair distance in the half minute or so we are able to devote to each boat. I think we all like guessing games, but NOT when we are trying to identify and time in a large fleet. As a result of the mis-identification, the finishing times for Deirdre and Wind Lady are reversed, and Wind Lady should have had a much higher placing in the race than is shown in this, and any other published lists.

PHOTOGRAPHS As well as the vast lengths of cine film shot of the race, a not inconsiderable number of black and white stills were taken. I have small proofs of two sets, and hope to be able to get hold of more. Mostly it seems to be the larger boats that caught the photographers eyes, but there are several of the smaller ones. Any owners in or near Maldon are invited to call in any evening to see if there are any good shots of their boats.

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENTS IN THE CARIBBEAN

Well, first I must thank you for your very nice letter, and the last couple of bulletins, which were very interesting. As you can see by our address, we have at last stopped working, and started sailing again! It was hard, hard, hard to leave St. Lucia. About a week before we left the Suzanne and Powindah arrived from England. Many of you must know Powindah, owned by Pat and John Manning, as she is a very nice gaff rigged Tahiti ketch. What with parties for them, and by them, and farewell parties from our friends on shore, we seemed to be in a perpetual state of inebriation, and didn't have the strength to get Sirius ready. A superhuman effort was made last Saturday, however, and we finally let go the buoy and moved off, to the accompaniment of ships hooters, fog horns, whistles and cheers !

Castries harbour entrance was cleared at 16.00 hours. The wind was quite fresh, and right on our tail, so that we fairly romped down the coast to Soufriere where we intended anchoring for the night so that we could make a really early start for St. Vincent, the next Island to the south, in the morning. All along the coast there it is very steep to. Instead of going right into the harbour of Soufriere, we decided to anchor in Anse Piton, a small bay which nestles in the lee of Petit Pignon - a mountain which rises sheer out of the sea to a height of 2,200 feet. This bay, so we had been told, was sheltered, and you could anchor in five fathoms. By the time we were making our way into the bay it was dark (gets dark here at 6 p.m., folks) but we had a good moon which illuminated the white beach. Sheltered anchorage - my foot ! The wind simply howled down the side of the mountain. We crept in closer and closer, with Pete up forward sounding with the dreaded lead - "No bottom . . . No Bottom". When we got so close that we could see the crabs running up the

beach and there was still no bottom, I decided enough was enough and got out of there a bit quick. I then decided to anchor in Soufriere as we'd been there before and knew there was a bottom there somewhere! By 20.00 hours we were anchored up within spitting distance of the beach, our bows in three fathoms and our stern in eight!

The next morning was very calm and for a couple of hours we motored. However it soon blew up and the St. Vincent Channel was very rough indeed. Short, steep waves and a gusty old wind. It soon sorted out the weak points of Sirius's gear, namely the port runner backstay which went with a twang! We thought we'd made very good time to St. Vincent, as we were off the north point by mid day, and that we would be able to reach Bequia by dark. The wind dropped off almost completely in the lee of the island, so that we had to run the 'stinker' almost constantly. When it became clear that we wouldn't make Bequia before dark, we decided to anchor in Boucement Bay, on the South West point of St. Vincent. We again went through the nerve wracking experience of sounding our way in. You have to go so close to the shore before you find any bottom, and then it shelves up very steeply. It was lovely anchored in that bay. Apparently St. Vincent supplies the whole world with arrowroot, and we can only assume that that was the source of the very earthy rich smell that came off the land. There were fish surfacing all around us, tunny or Spanish mackerel, I think, and Batty the cat was nearly beside himself with anticipation.

Bequia is only 13 miles from St. Vincent, so we anticipated a quick crossing. For the first couple of hours we had no wind, and as I hadn't much fuel in reserve, didn't like to run the 'stinker' for too long. When the wind did come though, it really blew and we simply flew along on a broad reach for Port Elizabeth. In approximately half an hour the beam sea had blown up to steep, high waves and the motion was very uncomfortable. One terrific gust of wind drove the lee rail under and another weak point was discovered - the main outhaul - that snapped, and set our mainsail wildly flapping! We gathered it in, and were relieved to find that only about two feet in one of the seams had split. Not bad for a 74 year old sail, eh!

With Sue on the helm, and Kath mending the sail, Pete and I were able to repair the outhaul, and the sail was soon ready to set again. However, we were bearing along under mizzen and headsails only and she felt well balanced, so I left her at that. We were soon in the lee of Bequia and rounded the point into Admiralty Bay. What a beautiful sight. We anchored in about seven fathoms about thirty five yards off the beach.

I must tell you something about this island. It was discovered by Christopher Columbus about five hundred years ago, and hasn't changed much since then. At one time the Bequians were famous for the whales they caught, but nowadays they stick to blackfish and sharks as they get a quicker profit on them. Their only other industry besides fishing is building boats, from 100 foot schooners to 12 foot dorys. Everything, but everything is imported into this island. Even bread! Fresh fruit and vegetables can only be obtained early Saturday mornings, and by early they mean about 6 a.m.!! There's no place to have a shower and no place to get ice. Life is hell in the tropics! It is very popular with visiting yachts, as it is quiet, beautiful, with clear water and excellent fishing. The local people are friendly and are not on the make. A rare quality out here or in Spain, Portugal and Las Palmas.

The island is also famous for Simmons the sailmaker. We shall be here for a week, as our sails are being overhauled. Then on to the Tobago Cays folks! Sixty miles of small islands before we get to Grenada. What a life! Here's thinking of you in the throes of winter. HA! HA! That's not very nice is it? I expect you are all getting your boats ready for sailing next

summer. I hope you have some decent weather and some grand sails, meanwhile, keep at it!

All the best to all O.G.A. members,

Steve and Sue Keefe.

CATALOGUE OF GAFFERS

Poseidon Built in 1913 in Mevigissy as a crabber. Laid up at Salcombe during the 1939 - 45 war, during which time her seams opened up badly. Her strip carvel construction caused 'Batchy' Carr a lot of trouble when he bought and converted her. Since then she has had three further owners, and is now owned by Brian Allen.

Sybil of Wivenhoe 10 ton oyster smack built by Aldous of Brightlingsea in 1901, of pitch pine on oak. Worked out of West Mersea until 1939, when she lay scuttled in a mud berth for ten years. She was then bought and salvaged by John Howlett, and converted to a yacht. Of typical design, her bowsprit protrudes 13'6" beyond the stem head. A more recent innovation is the 14H.P. Fowler Diesel. Now owned by Mr. J.C.Judd, who has fitted her with a new mast made from a Devon larch tree. She has cruised to Sweden and through France to the Mediterranean.

The Saith, and Annie Laurie - the two 16ft open boats owned by G. Dunn and Mrs. B.M.Baird Murray. Built by J.A.Sutherland of Lerwick. These boats are miniature versions of the long liner sixareens of Shetland, thought by many to be the most seaworthy small craft in the world. Known as Eela Boats, they function as summer in-shore fishing craft, fishing principally for Saith or immature cod. The design arrived in Shetland in the early 19th century from Scandinavia and is a virtually unchanged descendant of the type current in the Viking period. Their long straight keel enables them to run before the wind without broaching, but perhaps their unique feature is that the cross members, of which there are but three, are not attached to the keel.

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Blank space here due to the drawer for Newsletter articles being empty (BIG HINT !!)

Sorry about the delay in getting this issue out, but it's been far too hot to spend a whole evening typing.

J.A.S.

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