



OLD GAFFERS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER No. 1967/5

First, a welcome to the following new members;-

M. Barter, Dutch Neck, Waldoboro, Maine, U.S.A.

H. Bohndell, Rockport, Maine, U.S.A.

E. Coffin, Owls Head, Maine, U.S.A.

G.B. Humby, 1, Bank House, Chelmondiston, Ipswich, Suffolk (G.B.!)
Gwenili

B.J. Kenefic, 136 Cranbourne Way, Hayes, Middlesex.
Canto

T.J. Lancefield, 81 Adalia Crescent, Leigh on Sea, Essex.

S.D. Reeves, The Willows, Golden Hill, Whitstable, Kent.
Morna

And I hope it will be noted that the first three are from what many of us have probably imagined to be the exclusive stronghold of the "fibreglass bathtub". A particularly warm welcome to them - maybe it will not be too long before there is an O.G.A. Race held under the Stars and Stripes.

All boat owners should receive with this Newsletter a set of Boat Register forms. Further in the Newsletter are some notes on this. PLEASE read the notes, and help us with this venture.

Main Item this issue is the forthcoming meeting in London. This will be on Saturday, January 13th (the last day of the Boat Show). The meeting will be in two parts - the A.G.M., which will start at 6.30 p.m. at the Cruising Association Rooms, Chiltern Court, Baker Street, London, W.1. (immediately above Baker Street Underground Station), followed by a purely social meeting with a meal available if desired at 9.0 p.m. at the Izmir Restaurant, Leicester Place, London (North side of Leicester Square). I hope as many members as can will attend these meetings.

The agenda for the A.G.M. will be:-

- President's address
- Secretary's report
- Treasurer's report
- Election of new President
- 1968 Programme
- Any Other Business

Before giving any notes on this agenda, our retiring President, Captain John Clarke, R.N.R., has asked me to publish this letter:

Now that we are drawing towards the close of the year, I have had time to consider the progress and growth of the "Old Gaffers Association" and to realise what a long way we have come from the happy luncheon party in the Public Bar of the Jolly Sailor, Bursledon when Richardson, Rangabe, and myself were bragging about the sailing qualities of our three old gaffers, Betty, Kaylena, and Maresca, which was the fortuitous start of the Association in March 1957, although at the time we were unaware that this was so. We regretted that normal race officers setting Solent Courses always delighted in a windward leg which usually meant that however well an "old gaffer" was placed at the beginning of that leg he could seldom

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hold his own throughout the race to the windward mark. Accordingly, we there and then decided that we would arrange a race for our three gaff boats, but when other owners on the Hamble River heard of our intention we were prevailed upon to widen the scope of the race and open it to all "old gaffers". Our first meeting was in the Southgate Hotel, Winchester and in the early days we certainly had our excitements, the organisation was often rather sketchy and on a number of occasions irate owners called into question the haphazard organisation and we realised that if there was to be a race at all it would have to be a properly organised event.

On one occasion I remember that the 52 feet launch which I had arranged as a Committee Boat, which was lying at H.M.S. Wessex at Southampton, could not be started and I set off in an open Motor Cutter with no mast in an attempt to get to the start on time. In the event I recognised a friend in the 'Triton', (the Southampton Harbour Board Police Launch) and he was kind enough to tow me down Southampton Water at about 15 knots and we arrived at the start with two minutes to spare. Unfortunately the open Motor Cutter had no means of signalling and we were obliged to hold up a boathook with the haulyards rubbing over the top of it for the start flags. Notwithstanding we got the fleet of 20 boats away without mishap. We always had an enjoyable party in the evening and the "Old Gaffer" community did not seem to be worried that the Minister of Transport was going to bring in breathalyser tests for returning dinghy drivers.

From these haphazard beginnings we now have a properly constituted Association registered as a Yacht Club with a burgee and constituted committee. I like to think that the organisation is completely flexible, on the other hand I hope that there is sufficient rigidity to ensure properly audited accounts, and a structure of organisation which will ride out the gales of time and piratical individuality that it must of necessity suffer. As I have said before most "Old Gaffers", if not actually pirates, are pirates at heart, and always choose to exercise their own individuality; and like our boats we would never stand for rigid regimentation like a class boat association. On the other hand no regimentation at all leads to chaos and this is equally unacceptable. For this reason we must always have one meeting a year in London and the President and Officers must always think of themselves as one organisation with local committees all over the country.

From the new Maresca as Committee Boat this year, the start of the Solent Race under the Race Officer, Mr. Pot, was a wonderful sight when the whole fleet of 30 odd ships made off to the East Bramble with a quartering wind, flying every sort of sail imaginable (and a great number that were not imaginable) and every boat quite different in appearance and performance, but each one being a sea kindly old lady and many a classic of their age and type.

It would now seem an appropriate time if I joined the ranks of past Presidents and I must take this step with great regret, but with a certain knowledge that change at the top is an essential feature of maintaining a lively organisation. I have been proud to have been associated in the work of starting the Association and I feel that I should now make way for other views. If you will still have me I shall be delighted to attend your social Rallies if for no other reason than to display the unhappy sea going qualities of a mast head Bermudian sloop. If you cannot get to the Annual General Meeting do try to brief somebody who is attending with your views, but the Annual General Meeting on common ground in London is a very essential link between the two sister organisations on the East and South coasts, and your Secretary, John Scarlett, must have

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the unqualified support of all "Old Gaffers" if the Association is to ride out the storms of time, apathy, and individuality.

Old Gaffers where ever you are "Good Sailing" and I will always be delighted to swap a yarn with you if we ever meet up, and I do not need a good reason for the cork to be excused from the top of the bottle!

John S. Clarke.

Many of our members are not aware that in 1963, when a similar group of us on the East Coast started a race (as a copy of John's Solent Race) John wrote to me, suggesting that we should join together to form one Association to ensure the continuity of organisation of the races, to do what we could to assist in the preservation of records of our boats, and to assist owners in any other possible ways. Our distinctive burgee (which must have caused many a bar argument as to whether or not it IS a gaff jaw) was John's design, and for the first five years of the formal Association, we have run as John first visualised things in his letter to me, although I am quite certain that in 1963 none of us imagined we would be sending Newsletters to all the odd corners of the earth they now reach. It is with great regret that I have to accept that John is not to be swayed from his decision to resign as our President.

At a recent central committee meeting, after some discussion on the subject, and the rejection (by John Clarke) of suggestions such as the creation of the post of Admiral, it was agreed that we could follow the excellent example of Trinity House and create the post of Elder Gaffer for those such as John who retire from a more active office.

Therefore the proposal will be put to the A.G.M. that the Association should create the position of "ELDER GAFFER" and that our retiring President, John Clarke, should become Elder Gaffer.

The only nomination for the vacant post of President has been Alec Rangabe.

Since Alec Rangabe first joined John Clarke and Mike Richardson in planning the very first Old Gaffers Race, he has had to part from Kaylena, but his interest in the race has never faltered, and as those who take part will be well aware, he has ably filled the office of 'chief mathematician', seeing that all boats are properly and fairly rated and that the corrected times are properly calculated. I am sure that all who know Alec Rangabe will agree with me that we would be hard pressed to find a better successor to John Clarke as President.

On the 1968 programme, the committee offer to the meeting the proposal that events sponsored by the Association should be limited to one race and one rally in each area each year, with two clear week ends to be left between any events so any members able to manage time off work etc. can enter their boats in events in areas remote from their home ports.

On Finance, the committee offer to the meeting the proposal that any monies considered by the Treasurer to be surplus should be spent in ensuring the preservation of records, photographs etc. of gaffers. One such venture would be the copying onto 35mm transparencies of John Leather's unique collection of photographs of gaffers, many of which are both old and valuable.

DIARY DATES FOR 1968.

East Coast Race - Saturday, July 20th.
Solent Race - Saturday, September 7th.
East Coast Meeting Sunday, March 3rd, 3.0 p.m. at
Lawley, 70b Fambridge Road, Maldon.

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NOVEMBER MEETING The November meeting, held at the Maldon Little Ship Club on Saturday 11th, produced a packed house to hear John Leather's talk on Old Gaffers. The Vice Commodore of the M.L.S.C. assures me that somehow or other we had over 100 people packed in, and yet the vast number of those present who objected to any suggestion for a change of venue for what has now become a well established annual function showed all too clearly the regard O.G.A. members have for the comfortable premises of the M.L.S.C.

John Leather holds the somewhat vague office of Honorary Historian to the O.G.A., and his talk proved his absolute fitness to hold this post. Starting with a very brief sketch of the history of yachting, John dealt briefly with some of the better known types of gaffers to be found round our coasts, the Essex smacks and the Solent area boats receiving priority. Finally, John told us briefly something of the really big gaffers - the America's Cup boats. Those who find spinnakers rather large and troublesome sails would doubtless have been impressed by the racer which set a spinnaker equal in area to her normal sail - both at 14,000 sq. ft!

Throughout, the talk was enlivened by some charming personal glimpses - John's ancestor who worked his smack, helped save lives from the wrecks up and down the Essex coast, and managed to avoid the Revenue men; Old Man Aldous, who ruled over his boatyard at Brightlingsea, producing those superb smacks, and who in the course of the day would stop to give his foreman instructions, chalking relevant drawings on his bowler hat, then at the end of the conversation would jam his hat back on his head and walk off with the foreman following trying to copy the sketches from his master's hat. In this century, it seemed that no big gaff cutter was complete until it had one of John's uncles or great uncles aboard! These personal glimpses gave the whole talk a wonderfully close touch, and making the whole talk vividly alive.

Hero of the evening was Ian Edmond, who in the middle of the packed room stood pressed against the hot epidiascope projecting a selection of John's unique collection of old time photographs of gaffers and the men who sailed them.

I am sure that all who were there will agree with me in hoping that we shall be able to hear more of such a delightful speaker as John Leather.

WEEK END TRAWLING Trawling is fun - it must be, because there is no profit in it! Checking through our Fish Log, we find that the weight of fish caught, divided into the money laid out in equipment (nets, beams, warps, buoys, etc.) results in the fish costing about 25/6d. per pound! And that does not include the cost of back breaking labour and extra beer to slake the thirst which we would not have had if we had not gone trawling in the first place - if you see what we mean.

Having trawled for 15 years, on and off, (mainly off) we have come to the conclusion that trawling is a pure gamble. Once that net is trundling on the bottom, it is best to forget about logic, reason, the laws of random chance, distribution of fish population etc. and concentrate on intuition, cycles of luck, and fatalism. Then you will not be disappointed as the net comes slowly aboard to disclose a bag full of jelly-fish, or rocks (and holes), or old motor tyres. Very often it is more profitable to run a sweepstake on the catch than take the catch itself.

But for every bad haul to forget there is usually a good haul to remember - some plump sole or juicy skate, or a cluster of dabs, to be cleaned and skinned on deck as the boat heads back to the mooring. Then, later, to smell them sizzling in the frying pan (non stick variety if possible) and finally, the sweet, tender flesh melting in the mouth.

The more we remember the gasping breath and aching muscles as we pulled the net in, and the red eyed repairing of nets by the light of a hurricane lamp, the sweeter, tenderer and meltier the mouthfuls become.

The freedom of the seas will not keep the long arm of authority at a distance, - at any time you are liable to be boarded by Customs or Waterguard, who suspiciously study the size of mesh, mentally measure the under size fish in the bucket, and sniff disapprovingly at the blood and fish guts on deck. (Or were they looking for certain coloured gentlemen?)

To any Old Gaffer who thinks that shop bought fish tastes like ink soaked blotting paper, we say, learn to like it, brother, it will be cheaper in the long run!

But for those who insist on knowing more, we will delve into the economics, logistics and occupational hazards of trawling in future issues.

Crew of the Glad Times.

Now a somewhat unusual item. Neither the author nor the editor are prepared to vouch for the success of the process described.

Percy was off again. Percy the Egg (head) as he is known around the yard. You name it and Perce knows it; in theory, that is. It's when he comes to the practise part that he invariably falls down. Not that he will admit it; he's the original sewer and violets bod.

Anyway, as I was saying, Perce was off again. As I was sitting on one of last year's empty supply boxes (Gordons) hammering disconsolately at a perfectly good three inch paint brush trying to get out last year's boot top to put on this year's dockyard grey topside, Perce was carefully measuring and muttering over a sparkling clean paint kettle. Closer inspection showed a pint of turps being poured into the kettle whilst alongside lay a twin to the brush I had been doctoring. The enquiry as to why such an expensive commodity should be used on such a futile task elicited the reply that turps in bulk is not an expensive item, followed by further mutterings, and the production of a box of matches. Having set fire to the turps like a conjurer performing his party piece Perce started to leap and prance like a demented witchdoctor who has left a paraffin rag in his back pocket. He'd realised that to stand the kettle on the drum of turps to light it hadn't been a wise move, any more than the fact that it was only inches from the turn of the bilge of his yacht. (His name for it - actually it's a converted lifeboat, circa 1900, inherited from his grandfather) I don't know if the scream came before or after he grabbed the paintkettle and moved it to safety. However, he gave a very creditable performance, lapping the yard in one minute flat, despite the fact both hands were under his armpits, stopping only once to douse his hands in a puddle. Pity, really, the puddle was under my boat and I'd just finished antifouling.

However, on his return he doused the flames and stuck the petrified brush in the residue, stirring and muttering imprecations not so much under his breath as in my direction. Perce had the last laugh though. After a few minutes of stirring and thumping the brush in what was left of the turps it came out clean enough to wash out the old paint and clean up with a wire brush.

Leaving me to creep into the lee of my own conversion to go through a similar performance sans the lap of honour. Brewing up a pint of turps in a not too rusty tin, dousing it after a minute and working the old boottop in the residue made me wonder how many hammers and brushes could I have saved had I known of it sooner?

S. Saltuc.

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A PERSONAL APPEAL TO ALL MEMBERS.

With this Newsletter you will find the new Technical Boat Register Forms. We already have a card index of all boats, containing details of type, rough size, and in many cases measurements for handicapping. This technical register is a new venture. It is a determined attempt to record the details of construction of as many of the older boats as possible whilst they are still with us, and we appeal to all members to help us to make a success of this venture.

You may ask what use the register will be. Quite apart from its obvious historical value, it will enable us to answer more precisely the many queries we get from people re-rigging old boats, and re-converting bermudian conversions back to gaff. PLEASE help - you never know, the next boat you get might be minus some of its rigging, and if we have enough details in the register, we shall be able to give you plenty of help in re-rigging.

There will be another benefit too. Many of you know your boats thoroughly, and for you, completion of the register will be a very simple little chore. But other members are not so familiar with their boats, and an afternoon spent with a rule and the forms will soon familiarise the non technically minded owner with the craft he sails. And such familiarisation is always to be desired.

Please do not spend hours and hours taking measurements to fantastic accuracies. Such things as plank thicknesses and rib sizes are hardly likely to be found to be critical to nearer than a quarter of an inch, and many other measurements are far less critical. If you have to guess (weight of ballast, type of timber etc.) please indicate by a question mark.

Please also use your judgement, and if you think that a sketch will clarify some point, put a sketch on the back of the form. And if there are some measurements on your boat you feel would be of importance or interest, please add them - the form has been drafted for what we hope is an 'average' boat. A glance through the form should show the type of information we are after. Two copies of sheets one and two are being sent out, one copy to take down to the yard to record the measurements, and one to send back. Completion of the register will probably take you a whole afternoon on the boat, if not more. PLEASE give up this one afternoon to guarantee the preservation of a worthwhile record of the boat you love.

The register includes all the details required by Lloyds Register of Yachts. If you would object to the details of your boat being sent to Lloyds, please state this on the form.

Copies of any details in the register can be made available to members buying or selling boats etc.

(Sheet 2 - fault on stencil should read "Please put details of aft mast below details of fore mast". Sorry about this fault.)

I hope all boat owners will co-operate on this venture, and help us to make a success of it. Please return the forms to me.

John A. Scarlett.

ADVERTISEMENT.

LIFERAFTS for Hire - 4 and 6 man B.o.T., from £5 first week, £4 second week, then £2 a week through winter until Easter. Free delivery.

Liferaft Hire Company, 14 Chapel Road, Tiptree, Essex.
Tiptree 549 and London 01.692.6289

I hope this Newsletter can be got out in time to wish all of you the very best for Christmas and the New Year. J.A.S.

Published by the Old Gaffers Association,
Lawley, 70b Fambridge Road, Maldon, Essex.

OLD GAFFELERS ASSOCIATION

BOAT REGISTER

Name of Boat - (ex) T(H)OF

Reg. Number - Sail or Fishing Number -

Designer - Builder -

Where built - When -

Original Purpose, Class or type -

CONVERSIONS, ETC.

When Converted - By Whom - where -

Nature of Conversion -

SIZE Tonnage - Registered - Nett - Gross - T.M. -

Overall length - Waterline Length - Beam -

Draft - Depth from top of keel to underside of deck -

Length from foreside of stem to aft side of rudder post on deck -

With or without centreboard or leeboards -

ENGINE Make - Type - H.P. -

Fuel - Year Installed - Type of Prop.-

Centreline or offset Prop. - Dia. of Prop.-

CONSTRUCTION

Planking - Material - Thickness - Max. width -

Clinker, Carvel or other -

Sawn Frames - Timber - Size - x Spacing -

Bent Frames - Timber - Size - x Spacing -

Number of bent frames between pairs of sawn -

Fastenings - Material -(copper, iron, etc.) Size -

Floors - Material - Size -

Number of floors - Spacing -

Keel - Timber - Size -

Ballast -

Outside - Material - Weight - Size -

Inside - Material - Weight - Size of Pigs -

Stem - Timber - Size - Raked, upright, Curved, etc. -

Stern - (Transom, counter, etc.)

Deck Beams Material - Size - x Spacing -

Deck Material - Thickness - Max. Width -

Straight or Curved Laid - Finish -

Height of Bulwarks -

BOAT REGISTER

- 2 -

Name of Boat -

Name of owner -

RIG Cutter, Ketch, Yawl, Sloop, etc. -

(Please put details of rig below details for foremast)

Mains'l (& Mizzen) Luff Height - Topsail Luff -

Distance from Topsail luff to clew across sail -

Mast Overall height - Height, deck to hounds -

Dia. at hounds - Dia. at deck - Material -

Boom Length to outhaul sheave - Dia. - Material -Gaff Length to outhaul sheave - Dia. - Material -Topmast Overall height - Dia. - Material -

Height from deck to uppermost headsail halliard sheave -

Bowsprit Overall length - Dia. - Material -

Length outboard - Is bowsprit fixed or reefing -

Length from foreside of mast to bowsprit outhaul sheave -

SAILS (Material & weight of cloth used) Sailmaker - When -

Main - Mizzen -

Topsail - Staysail - (Please

No. 1 Jib - Genoa - put

Storm Jib - Others - areas

of

Sails)

RIGGING Number of Shrouds each side - Main - Mizzen -

Dia. of wire - Type of attachment to mast -

Attachment to Chainplates (e.g. lanyards) -

Have backstays been fitted with Highfield levers -

Length of Crosstrees (Total span) -

ACCOMMODATION Number & Type of berths -

Type of cooker - Where installed -

Height of coachroof sides - Camber of coachroof -

Height of doghouse above coachroof -

Width of coachroof - Does cockpit open
straight into cabin -

Average headroom in saloon - in focsle -

Freeboard - Stem - Amidships - Aft -

OLD GAFFLERS ASSOCIATION

BOAT REGISTER

Name of Boat - (ex) T(H)CF

Reg. Number - Sail or Fishing Number -

Designer - Builder -

Where built - When -

Original Purpose, Class or type -

CONVERSIONS, ETC.

When Converted - By Whom - Where -

Nature of Conversion -

SIZE Tonnage - Registered - Nett - Gross - T.M. -

Overall length - Waterline Length - Beam -

Draft - Depth from top of keel to underside of deck -

Length from foreside of stem to aft side of rudder post on deck -

With or without centreboard or leeboards -

ENGINE Make - Type - H.P. -

Fuel - Year Installed - Type of Prop.-

Centreline or offset Prop. - Dia. of Prop.-

CONSTRUCTION

Planking - Material - Thickness - Max. width -

Clinker, Carvel or other -

Sawn Frames - Timber - Size - x Spacing -

Bent Frames - Timber - Size - x Spacing -

Number of bent frames between pairs of sawn -

Fastenings - Material -(copper, iron, etc.) Size -

Floors - Material - Size -

Number of floors - Spacing -

Keel - Timber - Size -

Ballast -

Outside - Material - Weight - Size -

Inside - Material - Weight - Size of Pigs -

Stem - Timber - Size - Raked, upright, Curved, etc. -

Stern - (Transom, counter, etc.)

Deck Beams Material - Size - x Spacing -

Deck Material - Thickness - Max. Width -

Straight or Curved Laid - Finish -

Height of Bulwarks -

BOAT REGISTER

- 2 -

Name of Boat -

Name of owner -

RIG Cutter, Ketch, Yawl, Sloop, etc. -

(Please put details of rig below details for foremast)

Mains'l (& Mizzen) Luff Height - Topsail Luff -

Distance from Topsail luff to clew across sail -

Mast Overall height - Height, deck to hounds -

Dia. at hounds - Dia. at deck - Material -

Boom Length to outhaul sheave - Dia. - Material -Gaff Length to outhaul sheave - Dia. - Material -Topmast Overall height - Dia. - Material -

Height from deck to uppermost headsail halliard sheave -

Bowsprit Overall length - Dia. - Material -

Length outboard - Is bowsprit fixed or reefing -

Length from foreside of mast to bowsprit outhaul sheave -

SAILS (Material & weight of cloth used) Sailmaker - When -

Main - Mizzen -

Topsail - Staysail - (Please

No. 1 Jib - Genoa - put

Storm Jib - Others - areas

RIGGING Number of Shrouds each side - Main - Mizzen -

Spec. of wire - Type of attachment to mast -

Attachment to Chainplates (e.g. lanyards) -

Have backstays been fitted with Highfield levers -

Length of Crosstrees (Total span) -

ACCOMMODATION Number & Type of berths -

Type of cooker - Where installed -

Height of coachroof sides - Camber of coachroof -

Height of doghouse above coachroof -

Width of coachroof - Does cockpit open
straight into cabin -

Average headroom in saloon - in focsle -

Freeboard - Stem - Amidships - Aft -

Name of Boat -

Date purchased by present owner -

Port of Registry -

Home Port -

Please list all known previous owners, with, if possible, dates of purchase and sale - Please also note any other historical details. Please also use this page to add any explanations or points which you may feel are not made clear on the other two sheets. On completion, please fold the three sheets as the Newsletters are folded and return.

RUNNING RIGGING (Please put circumference, and note whether wire or rope, or both used. Please put any sketches needed to clarify arrangement of peak halliard, main sheet, etc. in margin.)

	Size	Wire or Rope	Sheave Dia. of blocks	Purchase
Throat Halliard				
Peak Halliard				
Tops'l Halliard				
Stays'l Halliard				
Jib Halliard				
Mizzen Halliard				
Main Sheet				
Jib Sheet				
Tops'l Sheet				
Other Sheets				