

RYA - EAST NEWS

SAM AND HEATHER CARRY EAST HOPES TO RIB FINAL

This year's eastern regional heat of the Honda RYA Youth RIB Championship attracted surprisingly few entrants.

The six contestants came from four inland water clubs, the host club Stewartby, Upware Boat Club and Paxton Lakes SC, both in Cambridgeshire and North Herts and East Beds SC, based at Hitchin, Herts.

The event was held at Stewartby Water Sports Club in Bedfordshire, the site of an old brick clay workings where club members sail dinghies, water ski and power boat.

The winners of the national final at Southampton in both the eight to 12 years of age and the 13 to 16 age group gain a 4.5 metre Avon rib with a 40hp four-stroke Honda outboard on a Indispension trailer for their club. Worth around £15,000 the boat can be used for power boat training, as a rescue boat or as sailing support boat.

The age of the competitors ranged from 14 years down to eight and, with the exception of one contestant, none of them had wide experience of driving RIBs. Most were proficient at handling flubbers with tiller-steered outboards – most were Topper or Laser sailors!

Winner of the older age group was Sam Anderson of Paxton Lakes SC – probably the most experienced RIB driver at the event, he often drives a Searanger, while the winner in the younger age group was Heather Fox of host club Stewartby – she normally sails a Topper and had driven a RIB only once before.

Caulum Rushby at just turned eight was the youngest competitor and his performance, literally a few seconds short of Heather's,



caught judge Andrew Morton's eye – "Definitely one to watch, a potential champion in the making," he commented.

The other competitors were Adam Fox (Stewartby), Simon Rose (North Herts and East Beds SC, who went to the final last year), and Elizabeth Wells (Upware).

RYA Motor Cruising Officer Andrew Morton said: "It's a shame that more youngsters did-

EIGHT-YEAR-OLD CAULUM RUSHBY IS A FUTURE CHAMP

n't enter, it would have been good to see some from the coastal and estuary waters clubs. The accent of the event is on fun. We want entrants to enjoy the experience and hopefully come back next year and maybe bring friends along as well. This is a great event for getting kids on to the water and teaching them what good boat handling means.



HEATHER FOX



SAM ANDERSON

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SUPPORT RIB CHALLENGE – MORTON

“The secret of success in this competition is not going hell for leather and turning on the speed – it’s about skilful, smooth driving. Each competitor has a run through and practice session with the instructor and then does two runs, the faster being the one that counts.

“Quite surprisingly all of them did best on their first run. Almost without exception they tensed up and tried to go just a bit too fast on the second run and messed it up.”

He also revealed that in regions such as Eastern, where the take-up has been limited, there will be a stronger push to get more youngsters involved.



PICTURES:

TOP: AN INSTRUCTOR ON A PRACTICE RUN SHOWS HOW NOT TO DO IT!

LEFT: ELIZABETH WELLS HAD NEVER DRIVEN A RIB BEFORE OR HANDLED A BOAT ON SO OPEN AN EXPANSE OF WATER.

CENTRE TOP: LAST YEAR'S FINALIST SIMON ROSE.

CENTRE BOTTOM: ADAM FOX (STEWARTBY) WAS A CLOSE RUNNER-UP IN THE OLDER AGE GROUP.

RIGHT: WOULD YOU BUY A BOAT FROM THESE TWO? JUDGES KEITH ELLISON AND ANDREW MORTON COMPARE NOTES.

JULIA'S ON TRACK FOR TRIP

Julia Peel, the 29-year-old Cambridge stroke victim who plans to sail round Britain as part of a disabled crew is to receive specialist training from the UK Sailing Academy. As RYA East News went to Press she and David Green, director of UKSA were working on a personalised training schedule. She told us: “I am thrilled to get this help. It is a major step forward in my plans to sail round Britain. It also shows that people with disabilities can enjoy what a lot of fit people take for granted.”

Julia is campaigning to get the phrase ‘disability’ replaced with ‘diffability – just finding things a bit more difficult to do’.



DISABLED SAILORS AT INTERNATIONAL REGATTA

A donation of £2,500 from the owners of the port of Felixstowe will enable six disabled sailors from the Woolverstone Project to travel to the first International Access Dinghy Regatta from the 19th to 21st of September at Thonon-les-Bains on Lake Geneva where they will be among the twelve representing Britain.

Receiving the cheque on behalf of the team, captain John Aldridge said: "This is a very generous donation. We expect to do well on Lake Geneva."

Hutchison Ports, which owns the Felixstowe container port already supports the organisation that was formed ten years ago by Royal Harwich Yacht Club, by paying for the upkeep of one of its nine Access dinghies. The Project caters for all forms of disability, and any age. Today it operates a fleet of 14 boats – two day-boats (a Hawk 20 and a Longboat) at Woolverstone, two Challenger trimarans at Alton Water, nine Access dinghies and an Illusion 2.4 metre (a miniature replica of an America's Cup yacht sailed single handed). It was also recently gifted a RIB with 25hp outboard by electricity supplier npower.

John, who has had a number of strokes and suffers from Muscular Dystrophy, had never sailed before he joined the Woolverstone project four years ago – now he's one of their most consistent winners.

The team is something of a family affair – John's brother Clive lost both his legs in an IRA bomb attack while serving in Northern Ireland with the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers. He says that joining the project has given him a new challenge and purpose to life. They both live in Maldon and travel weekly to either Woolverstone or Alton Water.

Youngest member of the team is 13-years-old Sam Honour, an Asperger sufferer who lives at Kirton. To see him handling one of the Access dinghies with confidence and panache is quite remarkable – he too had never



WOOLVERSTONE PROJECT ACCESS TEAM (L to R) Paul Davey, Hutchison Ports; Clive Aldridge, team captain John Aldridge, Sam Honour, Robin Penny and Chris Atkins in wheelchair.

sailed until he joined the project three years ago.

The most experienced sailor is Chris Atkin, who before he severely injured his spinal cord, which confines him to a wheelchair, sailed on a regular basis. Like John Aldridge he's got a mantelpiece full of trophies gained since he joined the Project. Chris comes from Stowmarket while Cerebellum Atrophy sufferer Robin Penny – an instructor with the Woolverstone Project – comes from Bury St Edmunds. Among his achievements he won the UK Access Championship last year.

Most recent member of the team is Jeannette Weaver from Staunton, an MS sufferer who joined the Project two years ago and took up racing only last year.

Project director, Johnty Dickinson said that the only constraint on people joining the project was the distance they felt they could travel to get there. "John and Clive do a round trip of over a hundred miles. They hardly ever miss a session. And as an instructor Robin is nearly always here. Just over 60 per cent of the participants are children under the age of 18."

Last year the Project filled 850 places on its boats – six of its sailors competed in the UK Access Championships. The team going to Geneva won the UK Traveller Series in these dinghies together with the UK Team Trophy. And in June this year the Project was awarded the Queen's Golden Jubilee Award.

It costs about £30,000 a year to run the Woolverstone Project, which, unlike many such bodies is classed as a sail training establishment and pays its RYA registered instructors. Instructors and sailors get together on weekday mornings except Fridays at Woolverstone during summer months and sail at Alton Water, every Monday winter and summer. There is also a youth session on Thursday summer evenings.

Woolverstone Project director, Johnty Dickinson



Data protection – don't be misled by scam mailing

Is your sailing club one of those that has recently been mailed by companies offering registration services to secure notification under the Data Protection Act? For which, of course, they will charge a fee.

The RYA has taken up this matter with the Information Commissioner following a rash of complaints from worried club secretaries. It appears that following the organisation's involvement, some companies offering registration services have been referred to the Office of Fair Trading.

Further information on this subject and a list of companies that may be involved in mail shots can be found on the Information Commissioner's website at <http://www.dpr.gov.uk/donotbemisled.html>.

RYA advice to clubs is to check with the Information Commission before responding to any requests for payment – however, it is likely that the mailing can be ignored.

Full information about notification under the Act can be found at www.dpr.gov.uk. This includes a self-assessment guide to help organisations check whether they are exempt from the requirement to notify their handling of personal information to the Commissioner's office.

A club whose handling of personal information by computer is limited to its own domestic administration is likely to be exempt from notification.

However, all those who handle personal information on computer – whether or not they are obliged to notify this – are required to follow the eight *Data Protection Principles* set out in the 1998 Act.

Detailed guidance on all aspects of data protection law and practice, can be found on the Commissioner's website www.dataprotection.gov.uk.



Shock horror! This waterspout was pictured at the Splash World championships at the end of July off the Dutch coast. It took less than five minutes to form and gave the race organisers a frightening 20 minutes (to say nothing of the 300 competitors on the water). Happily it moved away from the fleet before collapsing. Best British boat in the Gold fleet was David Jessop with a first and second, while in the silver fleet James Large, who recently moved into Splash from Optimist had a race win. All the major placings went to Dutch competitors.

THREAT TO SAILING CENTRE

Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT) has applied for planning permission to install an earthwork retaining wall across a section of Tollesbury Wick Marshes, its nature reserve adjacent to the yachting centre of Tollesbury on the River Blackwater, Essex.

The Trust wants the counterwall to protect an unique grazing marsh habitat in the event that the existing sea wall is allowed to deteriorate instead of being reinforced as sea levels in the area rise.

The resulting new salt marsh would dissipate tidal energy so a simple earthwork wall would stop the Wick flooding, which they say would be cheaper than maintaining the current sea wall.

Chris Edwards, chairman of the Blackwater and Colne Sailing Protection Association (BACSPA), has written to local planners objecting on the grounds that it is an unnecessary development.

He told EAST NEWS that the Trust considered there was a real risk of the existing sea wall being allowed to collapse in line with overall policy of managed retreat from sea ingress, prompted by a statement from English Nature that it would not be possible to maintain the current sea defences on the current line.

"While we agree that Tollesbury

Wick Marshes are an important and ancient habitat we're deeply concerned that if the existing sea wall isn't maintained and strengthened in its present position, then there will be nothing to stop Tollesbury, Woodrolfe and Salcott Creeks from silting up with the debris washed in and out of the area by the tides.

"The effect on the local sailing fraternity and the businesses built up around sailing and boating will be catastrophic. If the counterwall itself were ever to be breached then parts of Tollesbury itself could be subject to flooding.

"We want a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) carried out which must take into account the socio-economic aspects of not maintaining the existing sea wall against the potential loss of sailing and fishing facilities and the closure of boatyards and marinas as well – also the effect of such a sea wall breach on the whole estuary system."

In his submission to the planners Chris said: "Failure to maintain the existing prime sea wall around these marshes would have very serious deleterious effects on the economy and livelihood of Tollesbury, its industry and environs. All sailing, including important youth training and development work of Fellowship Afloat, would be at risk."

HEADSET WATCH ON CH 16 DROPPED BY COASTGUARD

The Coastguard will cease the dedicated headset watch on VHF Channel 16 and switch to a loud-speaker watch as from September 22, as part of the planned changes under the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) that will allow ships to cease a listening watch on Channel 16 after February 1, 2005.

For 30 years the coastguard has been responsible for the international VHF distress, safety and calling frequency on Channel 16. This service has included the maintenance of a continuous distress watch via headset.

Coastguards say that more reliable and automated communications technology via satellite and Digital Selective Calling (DSC) means they have to keep an ear on these differing methods. Having a coastguard operator tied to just one way of communication does not allow them to monitor other activities.

As a result from 00:01 on September 22, coastguards will maintain the Channel 16 distress watch either via headset or loud-speaker, depending on noise levels

and operational circumstances.

Peter Dymond, Head of Search and Rescue said: "The increasing range of other tasks now undertaken by Coastguard Rescue Co-ordination Centre staff requires a different approach to managing an operations room which is not helped if an operator is continuously tied to a single task.

"However, our operations room managers can still undertake a headset watch on VHF Channel 16 if the risk, current operations, noise levels or other circumstances demand it.

"Despite these changes, HM Coastguard will continue to ensure that the channel is only used for communications including the announcement of maritime safety information broadcasts and for establishing other communications which should be transferred to a suitable working channel.

"We also continue to recommend the installation of effective suitable equipment on vessels and would remind seafarers that mobile phones cannot be totally relied upon when at sea for distress and other emergency calls," he added.

NEWS IN BRIEF

NEW CHAIRMAN

Professor Kerry Turner CBE a world expert on environmental economics and management, including climate change, has been appointed chairman of the Broads Authority. Prof Turner is Director of both the Centre for Social and Economic Research on the Global Environment (CSERGE) and of the new sustainable Zuckerman Institute for Connective Environmental Research at the University of East Anglia. He succeeds Lady Knollys who retired from the Authority in May after 16 years service, six of them as chairman.

Martin Broom, managing director of Broom Boats, boat builders and hire fleet operators at Brundall, was re-elected vice chairman.

BOAT WATCH

Boat yards and sailing clubs on the Broads are being encouraged to join Norfolk Police Boat Watch scheme. Individual boat owners are also being invited to join the scheme with a one off payment of £10 plus VAT. The police keep a record of boat details then the individual member is linked to their ringmaster system, which relays messages on crime trends and incidents via phone, fax or email. Members of the scheme get a pack, which includes stickers for the boat. Boat yards and clubs can also get a deterrent Boatwatch sign for their premises, same size as Home Watch sign, and available at £25. Details from broadlandwatch.norpol@gtnet.gov.uk

DON'T TAKE SHORT CUT

Cruising yachts are increasingly making use of the main shipping channel when leaving or entering Harwich Harbour, particularly cutting the corner inside Landguard when heading north or east.

Harwich Harbour Authority has issued a Notice to Mariners to all local clubs and marinas to encourage members and customers to use the advisory yacht track. Although yachts are quite within their rights to use the main channel the increasing number of near misses with commercial ships is worrying.

REGION HAS BOATS FOR SALE – OFFERS SOUGHT

The Eastern Region Training panel has carried out a review of the hire fleets and has decided that some are no longer required and some need updating.

This follows a restatement of the region's role in youth training especially following the resignation of Colin Murray as East Zone High Performance Manager (HPM) after major changes to youth race training at headquarters.

The region's role is to get youngsters into the sport and help to train them to be competent sailors and to enjoy it.

With the changes in the race training formula it will be up to the new HPM and racing coaches to decide which youngsters go forward for higher level training and as part of the squads.

Because of this, and a decreasing level of use, the region's fleet of 420s is being offered for sale. Youngsters who have been allocated a 420

for race training will be given first option to buy the boats, rigs and trailers. The two RS400s are also up for sale as they are now little used.

The region's 8-metre RIB is to be decommissioned at the end of this season and will be offered for sale, complete with engine and road/launching trailer. With most clubs now having their own support RIBs and RYA headquarters operating a fleet of RIBs for use by coaches at national race events, it was felt the region's RIB was unnecessary. In addition one of the Optibat fleets is to be sold and replaced with new boats.

Stu Meese, who has resigned as Zone windsurf coach and regional windsurf co-ordinator to concentrate on Team15 clubs and events, has a couple of windsurf trailers for sale as well.

**Details from Chris Edwards,
Chairman of the Regional
Training Panel on 01621 868834.**

LITTLE SEEN RARE SPECIES IDENTIFIED ON BLACKWATER

The loss of the *Alert III* by Essex Police Marine Section has noticeably reduced the sightings of what could become another East Coast rare species – the maritime copper. Certainly one person who has been affected is Blackwater River Bailiff, Nigel Harmer.

He told East News: “We haven’t seen much of them around the Blackwater this year, and subsequently we’ve experienced a growth in the number of complaints received from members of the public regarding the behaviour of some Personal Watercraft (jetski) operators.”

All isn’t lost he says, after a flurry of activity during two weeks in July, he had five offenders summonsed to appear before Witham Magistrates later this year for offences committed under Maldon Council’s speed limit byelaw – top speed eight knots during the summer!

“Given the increasing numbers of people taking to the water on PWC’s, and the staggering lack of basic seamanship demonstrated by 75 per cent of them, I feel there is a very real need for some

form of nationally recognised licence to be produced to the harbour or local authorities, before these people can get afloat,” he said.

“Last year on the Blackwater we witnessed a fatal accident involving two PWCs and it’ll be a miracle if there aren’t more deaths this season. Until this becomes a ‘sexy’ issue, and a few politicians start pushing in the same direction, the situation will continue to spiral out of control away from those people tasked with enforcing the byelaws around the coast.”

Nigel’s growing frustration is based on years of speaking to river users from all aspects of the marine environment, including a good number of law-abiding jet-skiers.

“I know the RYA has its own views about this and doesn’t like the idea of compulsory licensing, but until there is some way we can ensure the proficiency of the people using these machines, there will be a growing number of crosses in the graveyard,” he added.

AGM AGREES NEW CONSTITUTION

Following the McKinsey review of the RYA and its structure, the organisation recommended that regions should particularly review their constitutions.

In line with this the regional committee agreed to changes which see RYA Eastern Region becoming RYA Eastern Regional Association. There are minor changes to the Objectives giving it a wider remit to cover ‘all forms of sailing and powerboating’ and ‘representing the interests of member clubs and associations on matters affecting all forms of sailing and powerboating in the region to external bodies’.

Following Sport England’s change of role, it was agreed that Sport England EAST should no longer have a committee representative. The committee has also opted to remain as an independent regional association, as opposed to a non-reporting sub committee of RYA Council.

In view of these constitutional changes, regional chairman Peter Catton will represent the region on Council, along with Fiona Wylie, as Simon Gardner has reached the end of his term.

The Regional Training Panel is not to carry out race training but concentrate on getting more youngsters into sailing.

Colin Murray, the East Zone High Performance Manager resigned in July. His replacement is Bruce Bonar from Rutland Water Sailing Centre, who starts on November 3rd.

RYA AGM, is being held on Thursday, October 23 at the Commonwealth Institute, preceded by a reception for club commodores at 3.30pm. East Region has 10 spaces. If any commodores wish to attend notify Robin Hill-Sanders (01621-816131) immediately.

George Baker had been awarded a posthumous RYA Regional Award.

CHART CORRECTIONS

Harwich Harbour approaches, Walton Backwater, recreational mark: North Cardinal Buoy recreational mark (unlit) has been established at the junction of Walton Channel and the Twizzle at 51°51’87N, 01°16’21E.

A wave and tidal gauge buoy in place in the vicinity of the South Threshold, off Harwich Harbour, in position 51°52.854N, 001°32.340E. The buoy is a Yellow Pillar Buoy with a Yellow Cross Topmark. With light characteristics: Mo(U) Y 15s 2m 3M.

Charts 2152 (panel B) and 2484 (upper panel), River Thames, Halfway Reach and Erith Reach, lights, mooring buoys, barge. Insert Light Fl.Y.2.5s at 51° 30’24N, 0° 10’07E
Delete symbol, barge 51° 30’77N, 0° 08’14E and buoys close NW and SE of this position.

Chart 3741 East Coast, River Colne, Brightlingsea Approach Channel, depth.
Insert depth 0.6 at 51° 48’08N, 1° 00’76E.

Chart Nos 1491 and 2693; East Coast, River Stour, Parkeston Quay Northwest-wards, Mooring buoys:
Insert : No 5 Trinity House at 51° 57’·07N, 1° 13’·76E.
Insert : No 4 Trinity House at 51° 57’·12N, 1° 14’·10E.

Charts 1406, 1408, 1504 and 3371; North Sea, Netherlands Sector, Noord Hinder North TSS Westwards, Wreck:
Insert: (dotted wreck circle enclosing No 32) Wk at 52° 10’·74N, 2° 53’·51E.

Charts 1504 and 2322; North Sea, Netherlands Sector, Bruine Bank Eastwards, Foul:
Insert: (Hatch symbol) at 52° 44’·08N, 3° 21’·37E.

Charts 1408, 1546 and 2322; Netherlands, Den Helder Westwards, Zuider Haaks, Wreck Buoy:
Substitute: (dotted circle enclosing 16.6 for wreck symbol) Wk at 52° 55’·72N, 4° 32’·89E.
Delete: West cardinal mark YBY VQ(9)10s Wreck close West of above position.

NEW SCHEME TACKLES UNMARKED FISHING GEAR

There has been an alarming increase in the number of yachts getting fishing tackle entangled with their propellers. It has led to an extension of the Confidential Hazardous Incident Reporting Programme (CHIRP) – set up originally to deal with incidents in the aviation sector and widened last year to include commercial shipping – to cover leisure boating as well.

Several maritime agencies including the Marine Accident Investigation Branch, the MCA, the Chamber of Shipping, the UK Maritime Pilots Association, the Nautical Institute and the RYA have been consulting on widening the scope of the scheme.

What has given impetus to this move has been the growth of poorly marked or unmarked lobster pots that cannot even be seen in daylight or in a choppy sea. Many have no flag to signal their location and during a fast tide can get dragged under. Unaware of the hazard, boats are driving over the submerged lobster pots and fouling their propellers.

According to Steve Johnson, the RYA Cruising Manager, more yachtsmen are also reporting that fishermen are using steel wire to anchor the lobster pots, which propeller cutters cannot sever.

“If the wire or rope holds, the boat remains anchored to the pot and a member of the crew has to go overboard and attempt to free the boat. In a choppy sea this is an extremely dangerous situation. Alternatively the wire can free itself from the lobster pot and become wrapped around the spinning propeller, potentially lacerating the hull. In some cases the wire or rope can disable the propeller leaving the boat to drift and encounter rocks and other hazardous objects.

“When we are aware of the extent of the situation we can begin to do something about it and make the waters a safer place to be.”

Another danger is that of boats with skeg hung rudders or small craft with transom rudders can also suffer severe damage and steering failure.



RYA Cruising manager, Steve Johnson, who discussed the problem of unmarked lobster pots with members of the Regional Committee, on a recent visit to the region.

Yachtsmen are urged to report any incidents directly to the RYA by contacting RYA Cruising on 0845 345 0370 or by emailing cruising@rya.org.uk. Alternatively to report the incident confidentially to the Confidential Hazardous Incident Reporting Programme (CHIRP). CHIRP forms can be downloaded from the RYA website www.rya.org.uk.

CHIRP will receive incident reports, which are then validated as far as possible. The anonymous reports are then reviewed by the advisory board, which includes representatives from the MCA and MAIB. The objective is to make the information as widely available as possible to prevent similar incidents, whilst maintaining confidentiality of the source.

NEW BYE-LAWS ON SPEED AND LOBSTER POTS

Harwich Harbour Authority has issued a new set of byelaws updating those originally introduced in 1984. Among them are new speed limits.

In the channels approaching the harbour a maximum of 17 knots over the ground has been imposed – this applies to high speed motor yachts as well as commercial ships – entering the harbour vessels have to reduce to

12 knots at a line between Platters and Pitching Ground until they reach a line between Cliff Foot and North West Beach buoys when speed must be further reduced to eight knots.

In effect the maximum speed within the harbour itself is now eight knots and is reduced still further to five knots in any channel abeam the yacht mooring pontoons and fishing berths at Halfpenny Pier, Harwich.

Fishing in the fairway is now prohibited and following increasing complaints from yachtsmen, who are strongly recommended to follow proscribed yacht channels through the harbour, lobster pots or fixed nets cannot be left unattended in any fairway within the Authority's area; or at any anchorage designated by the Authority. Where lobster pots are allowed to be laid, in shallows



Picture by Colin Jarman

See one of these – report it to the local harbour authority, RYA Cruising and/or CHIRP

out of the yacht track, they must be clearly marked by floats or flags so as to be visible at all states of the tide.

HOTEL TO REPLACE DEBEN BOATYARD

Once a hive of boat building and repair activity, the redundant Whisstock's Boatyard at Woodbridge is to be redeveloped as a waterside hotel and pub.

This latest scheme, by a national brewery chain, follows the rejection of plan to erect luxury housing on the site overlooking the picturesque River Deben.

The local council says it is vital Woodbridge makes the most of existing facilities at Lime Kiln and Ferry Quays and that river-related recreational activities are safeguarded.

CLUB IN "IT" LEAD

Pin Mill Sailing Club on the river Orwell could be the first on the East Coast to offer its members a Broadband email and web surfing facility, following the recent announcement that Peninsula Broadband has succeeded in winning funding in the East of England Development Agency's (EEDA) Connecting Communities Competition for a broadband network.

The club is one of a number of organisations on the Shotley Peninsula that joined forces to apply for the service.

Rick Kirkup, secretary of PMSC said: "The entry was one of only four to win out of over 20 submitted in Suffolk, and the total for the Eastern Region was nearly 90. It is very early days and PMSC as an organisation has not yet fully explored the potential benefits, many of which may well not become apparent until the technology is up and running."

Urging sailing and boating clubs to get involved in the new technology, Rick outlined some of the facilities and opportunities that could be available with Broadband, include video broadcasting, video conferencing, fast downloading of films, music and other materials not possible with the slow speeds of existing web

OLD GAFFERS NOT OUT AT FORTY



This year is the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Old Gaffers Association (OGA). Reliable reports have it that over a pint or three in Maldon Little Ships Club one summer evening in 1963 a group of local gaffer owners met with a number of their south coast compatriots and gave birth to the organisation.

Today there are some 3000 members world-wide, although the majority are to be found here on the East Coast. To celebrate the East Coast OGA committee organised a week-long rally on

access. It could greatly enhance the exchange of information between clubs.

Add to that fixed costs, no blocking of telephone lines and an 'always on' availability allowing e-mails to appear immediately on receipt without the need to

the Essex and Suffolk rivers during August. Some 40 plus boats ranging from a 65ft converted trawler smack right down to a 14ft gaff-rigged dinghy took part.

The event kicked off from Stone Point, in Walton Backwaters and took in a ditch crawl to Manningtree on the Stour, dinner at Haven Ports Yacht Club on the Orwell, a passage race down to Brightlingsea on the Colne, a visit to West Mersea and a commemorative race as part of Maldon Town's annual regatta on the Blackwater.

log on and search for them, and the benefits to clubs could be tremendous.

"Another area worth exploring is that of security of boats, buildings and equipment that could benefit from web cam technology," commented Rick Kirkup.

WHO'S WHO AT RYA EAST

Chairman: Peter Catton	01473 250247
Vice-Chairman and Chairman Training Panel: Chris Edwards	01621 868834
Secretary: Robin Hill-Sanders	01621 816131
Treasurer: Barry Naylor	01502 730759
Regional Coach: Derek Burchell	01279 793215
Windsurf Liaison and T15 co-ordinator: Stu Meese	01206 230118
Sailability Co-ordinator: Fiona Wylie	01473 780965
High Performance Manager: Bruce Bonar (from Nov 3)	
Dinghy Fleet Hire Manager: John Hancock	07712 446513
Environmental Co-ordinator: Chris Edwards	01621 868834
Regional Communicator: Garth Cooper	01362 699195
RYA Council reps: Peter Catton and Fiona Wylie	

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