East Coast OGA AGM: 31 October 2026
Presidents Report

Whilst the sea further west might be blue and clear and far over the western horizon coconut palms fringe the white sandy beaches of the Caribbean sailing Titch our Memory 19 in the Summer Cruise this year, in company with gaffer friends old and new reminded us just how fortunate we are on the East Coast to have such a wonderful cruising ground with our rivers, coast and the near continent of France, Belgium and the Netherlands.

We are also fortunate on the East Coast to have a dedicated, committed hard working area committee who have again this year organised sailing and social events, thankyou to all of them and especially Pete Eliston Area Secretary and Vice President who has been particularly active during 2025 and 2026 whilst Jo and I have been away sailing.

Any organisation must continue to evolve to stay relevant, and we are delighted to welcome new committee members Marie Louise Ferrigno and Clare Roberts who will bring new ideas and energy to the committee. Other changes to the committee include Pete Elliston Area Secretary and Sarah Adie who are both standing down. It is important to also recognise and thank the volunteers who don't wish to be on the committee but are happy to both organise and help with events.

Events, we know, are a great way to recruit new members and EC membership continues to grow, more on this in the Area Secretary report.

If you are interested to be on the committee, please come and talk to us and if you want to volunteer to help at an event please make your self-known to a member of the committee. We also welcome constructive feedback either at an event, at the bar by email or WhatsApp. Help us to make the East Coast Area better for current and future members.

Looking ahead in July 2028 the East Coast are organising OGA 65 for the national OGA to celebrate 65 years of the association. This event will be based to the River Blackwater hosted by WMYC, thank you to Richard Bailey for liaising with WMYC and securing them as our hosts and base for the event.

Planning is in the very early stages but there will be programmes for both open boats and cruisers.

Any Blackwater based members who would like to help organise this event please get in touch; your local knowledge and contacts will be especially welcome.

Paul Masters, Area President

Secretary's Report

Crossing the Bar

This year there was only one. We all will remember her unending enthusiasm, wonderful laughter and her slightly devilish sense of humour. Lorna May Hill was remembered in July by all those who sailed to Southwold as there was a co-ordinated tribute to her with all boats hove too at sea off the Sizewell Bank as those other members went to the Seven Hills Crematorium in Ipswich. So, let's take a moment for Lorna.

New members

Paul has just mentioned the dedication of the committee and those not on the committee that organise your events and it is worth reinforcing the point that without new members joining at a good rate, areas can stagnate, shrink and cease to be. So on the EC we are very fortunate in gaining new members at quite a rate.

This continual influx of ‘talent’ allows us to put on events, run a fantastic Comms section with great articles in all sorts of publications, which then promote the Area so it gets new members. You see what happens here? It seems to self generate!

To support this I have done a bit of number crunching from the data our National Membership Secretary sends out: Thanks Clare!! Last year we had 34 new membership forms filled in at this time. This year that number is 54. I have analysed 44 of those forms, not sure why that is different but my computer ‘search control/shift/F’ is as good as Sarah’s but . . . The question on the forms asks ‘what prompted you to join?’

Did not answer: 5
Facebook: 4
A publication: 2
Personal: 2
Website: 11 (Interestingly I do not know what the Website was)
Instagram: 6
Events: 10
Information with new boat: 2
Boatshow: 1

Events really does play it’s part due to the organisers on and off the committee. Paul mentioned Marie Louise Ferrigno and Clare Roberts as new Committee members. M-L only joined the OGA last September, because she wanted to sail a Gaffling at the Norfolk Rally (organised by Shona, who is not on the committee)!

M-L is our own East Coast ‘El Ferrigno effect’. She is under 40 and combined with the other Younger Members on and off the committee, represent a formidable forward-thinking group as we have already seen in the last three Summer Cruises!

Clare, somewhat older, joined the EC Gaffers just a few years ago and is now on our EC committee bringing a wealth of professional experience in personnel development and some of you have already met her. So, to our new members here who joined within the last 18 months please hold your hands up! We thank you all!

Review of events: 2026

Several years ago when I was doing this role before Lorna, who was Secretary for nine years, I did an analysis on the number of days boats were sailing at our events. So here are ‘boat days’ (BD) for this year:

Deben event: 3 days 31 boats= 93 BDs (plus 3 Gaffling days)

Stone point Rally: 2 days 11 boats=22 BDs

Swallows: 3 days 43 boats= 129 BDs (plus 12 Gaffling days)

ECR: 1 day, 48 boats= 48 (32 + 16) BDs (best turnout for years)

Cruise: 7 days 26 boats= 82 (plus 10 Gaffling days)

Rutland event: 34 BDs with 15 Gaffling days

Friesland: 7 days 15 boats= 105

Totals overall: 513 BDs with 40 Gaffling days. That is a hell of a haul of sailing days so thanks to all who came and thanks to those setting them up.

Pete Elliston (PTK), Area Secretary

Racing and Handicap Committee Report

The East Coast Race moved to a new home at West Mersea Yacht Club this year, attracting 49 boats across all classes, including a welcome return of the Class 5 fleet and strong participation from the MFOB fleet. This made it one of the largest classic sailing events on the East Coast by participation. The event will return to West Mersea next year, with plans to build further on this year's success.

The Summer Cruise was another highlight, covering approximately 75 nautical miles and bringing together 27 boats. The fleet visited a mixture of familiar destinations and new cruise locations, including Waldringfield and Felixstowe Ferry, with planning already underway for next year's cruise, which will focus on the River Blackwater.

Progress has also continued through the Racing and Handicapping Subcommittee, with a focus on improving the transparency and consistency of the EC Area's racing arrangements. New guidance is now available on the website covering the class system, handicap calculations, boat measurement and the approach to performance adjustments. In addition, nearly two decades of race results have been digitised, providing a more comprehensive dataset to support future handicap reviews.

The EC OGA has also continued to encourage fair racing and the appropriate use of the protest process, with volunteers available to form a protest committee when required.

Both the East Coast Race and Summer Cruise rely on considerable volunteer support, and thanks are extended to everyone who contributed to organising and delivering these events, as well as those involved in the ongoing work of the Racing and Handicapping Subcommittee.

Ed Roberts, EC OGA Cruise Sub Committee Chair

Communications Report

We've summarised what the EC Comms. team does below, there's a lot of work involved! We aim to keep EC Members involved and attract new members. We hope Members feel they can communicate with us and each other via the various online channels, so the Comms. is not all 'one way'!

East Coast Area pages on the OGA website: www.oga.org.uk

• EC Events tab: schedule, details and secure entry forms for all East Coast events.

• EC Racing tab: details of all East Coast racing, including Handicaps.

• EC Online tab: links to access social media channels, Eastcoaster & Newsletter archive.

Eastcoaster Newsletter 'blog': www.eastcoastgaffers.org.uk

Content is typically news, notices, report & event write-ups, racing results & awards, notification of death, extracts from historic logs, photo galleries & videos, information about third party events of interest and other articles of general interest. There are at least two or three updates every month.

Quarterly Eastcoaster Newsletter

A 'download to print' version of the Eastcoaster online content is published four times per year along with a 'flipbook' version on the website. Along with back issues to 1994, it is available to print at home and, for a small fee, delivered by post.

Social Media and email

WhatsApp and Facebook East Coast Member groups for general chat, queries and other member to member communication eg day-to-day planning, notices and updates during events.

YouTube OGA channel with videos of gaffer-related sailing of interest to EC Members.

Monthly email campaigns to East Coast members for whom we have an email address: short news updates and links to new content online.

Printed media

Gaffers Log (Editor, Jay Cresswell, log@oga.org.uk): updates and general articles provided to the Editor three times per year, promoting East Coast area activity and interests. National Press: East Coast Gaffer articles supplied to Yachting/Boating magazines and EC Press to promote gaffering and the OGA on the East Coast.

How can you help?

We spend a lot of time encouraging Members to provide narratives & photos then editing it to present online and in print. Contributors can help us by thinking about these suggestions . . .

DO think about dropping a line to the Editor before we've asked: a few words as plain text is fine!

DO sort through your photos and send the best dozen or so, not the whole Camera Roll!!

DO give photos captions & titles (and be sure you have permission if minors are in them)

DON'T send images via WhatsApp or other 'image-scrunching' apps.! We need higher res. for print!

Review & feedback

DO let us know what you'd like in future and what you think we should stop . . . here's a few starters:

• What do you enjoy reading on the EC Area websites?

• How can we improve the system of event registration, payment, notification etc.?

• Where is your 'first stop' to find information about OGA EC events and activities?

• Should the email campaigns be longer/shorter, more or less often?

• Should we aim to get more coverage in the national boating press?

• Do you value the quarterly PDF 'download to print' & 'flipbook' Eastcoaster Newsletter?

• What printed publications should we aim to do in future, if any?

East Coast OGA Comms. Sub-Committee: Sarah Adie, Nick Phillips & Beverley Yates