

OGA Small Boats Report for 2025 ACM.

The 2024 Sailing Season

Looking back, I see that I blamed the weather in 2023 for a “challenging” small boat sailing season (who can forget Levington?). 2024 may not have given us the balmy summer we were all hoping for, but it was certainly an improvement on 2023!

I think all the usual small boats events took place in the Areas, last year, and there were some new ones, too. The reports that I have read suggest that a lot of fun was had by those who took part in these and I was particularly pleased to see some new faces at those events that I attended. I am pleased, too, to see that the NW Area is developing into one of the hot spots for small boat sailing in the OGA with good opportunities for sailing both on the coast and in the Lake District. There has been talk of the Gaffling Championship taking place in the NW during 2025.

Unfortunately, our efforts to hold a small boat event at Weymouth/Portland in 2024 came to nought as we were unable to guarantee the land side facilities we needed to make the event a success.

Gaffling 4.1

The first Gaffling Championships, postponed from 2023, took place in May this year as part of the EC Deben Rally. Many thanks to the sponsors, Teamac, and congratulations to the winners Andy, Lis and Marvin Godfrey.

One of the Gafflings, “Dart” has moved to a new owner on the East Coast and has been re-named “Shrimp”. I have already heard some interesting tales of the new owner’s exploits. Recently, “Clachnacudney” has changed hands and has also moved to the EC. The prospects for class racing for Gafflings in those parts are now looking more promising.

We will be conducting a full review of the Gaffling project as a separate agenda item at the ACM.

Communications

We have continued to have an OGA Small Boats piece in most editions of Watercraft magazine. I made a plea, last year, for the Areas to provide write-ups of their events for inclusion in this. Many thanks to those people in the Areas who responded to this – I am very confident that reports on “real” sailing events make the best articles and help to showcase what we do.

The Small Boats WhatsApp group has continued to attract chat about general boaty topics but I am not sure if it has yet been used to organise any “pop-up” sailing events. 2025, perhaps?

Looking Forward to 2025

I can see from the OGA calendar that the needs of small boat sailors are likely to be well-served again in 2025 with plenty of events both at home and abroad (Morbihan, St Malo, anyone?). As always, I would encourage the Areas to get the dates of all their events into the calendar as soon as possible to give potential visitors the chance to include them in their developing plans. I will be running a new small boat event in conjunction with SW Gaffers at Mylor from 4th – 6th July and a good number of people have already registered for this.

Organisation

2025 will be my fifth year as Small Boat Secretary and I have decided it will be my last. If anyone is interested in taking on this role, I will be very happy to discuss it with them and to work with them during the year to ensure a smooth hand over.

David Bewick.

OGA Small Boats Secretary.