

OGA Membership Secretary Report January 2025

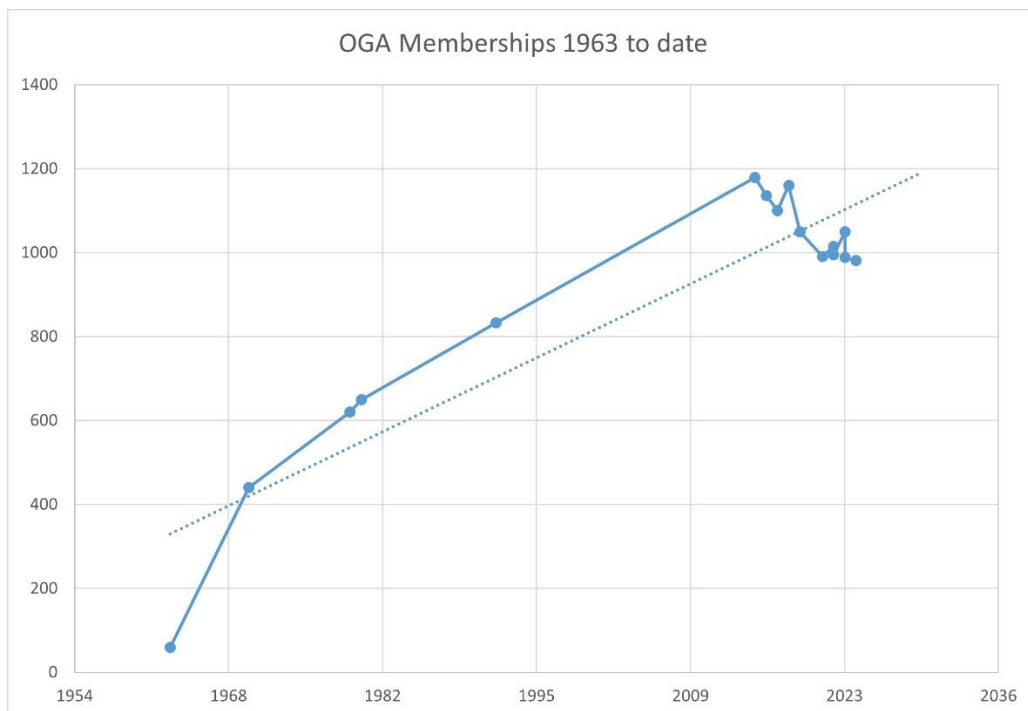
I have continued to record memberships at the end of March and of October, as before. The table below shows total memberships by Area and Total memberships (the figures in brackets are total members including Family members).

Area	31st October 2023	31st March 2024	31st October 2024
Bristol Channel	49(60)	46(59)	47(59)
Dublin Bay	118(122)	103(106)	105(108)
East Coast	315(391)	281(356)	297(376)
Northeast	17(22)	18(23)	17(22)
North Wales	37(45)	38(45)	39(47)
Northwest	34(40)	39(48)	42(50)
Scotland	35(44)	33(41)	36(44)
Solent	267(346)	250(324)	259(333)
Southwest	160(205)	155(195)	164(205)
Overseas (not in an area)	19(20)	18(19)	22(23)
Total memberships	1050(1295)	981(1217)	1028(1269)

Of the latest figures, 404 of these memberships have expressed an interest in Small Boats. (I am unclear how many of these members are actually trailer sailors, as not all new applicants read the form properly!)

New applications are still arriving at nearly 100 per year, but losses gradually increase, mostly due to age. Despite our best efforts, membership numbers continue to reduce gradually, though I think they would be much worse without our best efforts. (We are certainly not unique among sailing organisations in this!)

Colin Stroud has been looking at longer term trends, as illustrated by the graph below: -



We used the figures he and I could locate over the years - the numbers are of memberships, not total members, in order to make the numbers comparable. Clearly the numbers are not enough to draw any major conclusions from, but the fall in numbers seems to me to be definitely less over the last few years (since Covid or so) than it was between 2015 (or possibly before! – I don't have regular figures before that) and 2020.

Colin and I have also looked at the reasons given for joining by new members.

Reasons for joining. (as of 24th December 2024)

Of the 298 New Members who selected an option on the joining form:-

114 chose OGA event

104 chose Information on a website

33 chose Article in a publication

20 chose Facebook

16 chose Visit to a boat show

9 chose Recommendation

1 chose Cockpit card

1 chose Instagram

So, though events are clearly the main attraction, and publicity through articles very useful, it is clear that a substantial chunk of new membership comes through the website and social media, and we should keep these attractive and up-to-date.

This year we have had a vote on the Yearbook, and whether we should continue with paper copies – this has been mainly my responsibility, but since the results of that are in a separate report, I will not go into details here.

As you will mostly be aware, I am resigning now, but I am very pleased to say that Clare Thomas is standing to replace me. Since we are in the middle of the busiest part of the year, I will be handing over to her during the Spring, as Alistair did with me. I have offered to continue to administer the Barclays Payflow Direct Debits for the foreseeable future, to make things easier for the prospective candidate - these cannot all be changed to GoCardless yet, as there are still (in December) 47 memberships who pay this way for whom we have no email address – and GoCardless is impossible without an email. But the numbers of memberships with no email address is falling all the time.

Mary Gibbs
Membership Secretary
December 28, 2025