

## **Bristol Channel Area Report – Jan 20205 ACM**

Following the 60th Anniversary celebrations of the Old Gaffers Association last year, 2024 has been a quieter year for our Bristol Channel group.

The unpredictable weather has certainly played its part.

Out of a total of six planned Bristol Channel sorties from Cardiff Bay throughout the season, one took place on the planned date, two were rearranged at the last minute, and three were cancelled! In addition to the cruising events, racing in the form of timed laps in Cardiff Bay has also taken a hit. Unfortunately, again due to the weather only a very few took place, but a small number of intrepid sailors braved the elements to go out and enjoy themselves!

Despite this, the spirit of our sixty strong community has remained strong, and we are pleased to report that we've continued to stay connected and engaged in other ways.

Efficient use of WhatsApp has been instrumental in keeping us all on track with the cruising arrangements: This has been invaluable, ensuring that everyone is kept up-to-date on the changes and developments with our events.

Another positive that has emerged this year is the increased use of our Facebook page. It's heartening to see more members sharing updates, photographs, and information. We encourage everyone to continue this trend and, where possible, to cross-post content from our WhatsApp groups. It's an excellent way to raise the profile of the Old Gaffers Association and attract new members while showcasing the beauty and camaraderie of our community to a wider audience.

Zoom meetings are held each month throughout the winter season on the second Thursday of the month: These Zoom meetings have proven to be a fantastic way to stay in touch during the winter months, with lively discussions and a chance to hear from members all around the region. Everyone in the area is encouraged to join in – it's a great opportunity to learn something new, catch up with old friends, and stay connected with the wider OGA community. Presentations are informal, and are more usually of the exploits of OGA members themselves, but also branching out to other appropriate sources such as the local RNLI.

Sails of note during the season (of which we have been informed), include Koren and Rob Williams sailing their Yarmouth 23 "Elizabeth Ann" from Cardiff to her new home in Bradwell on the East Coast, and Patrick Vyvyan Robertson sailing "Capria" (Heard 28) from South Wales, via the west coast of Ireland to Scotland. Both will be presented in our Winter Zoom Series.

Further, the "Severn Tidings", our association's newsletter (Spring and Autumn editions), and, new in 2024, an attempt to have monthly BC Area e mail (Chimp) updates, in addition to maintaining and updating our website, all help to keep us informed and connected.

As we look towards the future, it's important that we continue to think ahead and consider how we can grow and evolve our community

We are aware that there is a lack of new members with boats joining our Organisation and participating in the cruises or races, some of our older members are selling up, and it is proving more difficult to engage new committee members.

For 2025 we need to make an even bigger effort to enlist potential members

Ideas under consideration include: -

- Have an open day to take sailors on our boats
- Approach the Cardiff Bay sailing school to encourage people who have completed a sailing course to consider their future vessels
- Approach the TARS (Cardiff Bay Cruisers) and see if they would like to come cruising with us – they currently have twenty-six members in their group
- Should we have a dedicated committee member researching the possibilities for our future

It is recognised that these initiatives are very Cardiff focused, and the committee would love to hear from any and all members, in any locations, with any ideas on how to promote our wonderful boats.

Suggestions are very welcome from any quarter!

Susanne Newbold – President

Andrew Kelland - Secretary