

Bristol Channel Report

ACM – 31st January 2026

The Gaffers - in Cardiff Bay specifically, have enjoyed a pretty good season in 2025, be it all with a diminishing active participation.

Five cruises in the Bristol Channel had been planned for the season, with four taking place, the final one due in September being cancelled on account of an abrupt change in the weather at the end of August. Two took place on their respective scheduled dates, two having to be delayed due to vagaries of the weather. Happily, some “White Goods” (i.e. Cardiff Bay Yacht Club (CBYC) Cruisers!) have started to join us, swelling the fleet numbers!

Cooperation with the Cruising Fleet is forming good relationships within CBYC, but we have yet to welcome any defectors across the marina: - Work in progress!

A cruising highlight was the participation of one Mary Gibbs, who crewed on Hetty Pegler (Crabber 24), one of the boats participating in the late August Down Channel Cruise. Mary has sold her own boat and asked our Cruise Co-ordinator if she could possibly be accommodated in one of the cruises.

It wasn't Mary's undoubted skills which are considered to be the highlight, but rather the fact that our wonderful organisation facilitates such opportunities. It has given me ideas myself for how I might manage a bit of “Cross Area” sailing without having to move my boat! (Mary left us, planning a sail in the Lake District using the same methodology!)

A Cardiff Bay “Bay Raider” (Nona Me) was trailed over to France by her skipper David Botterill, and participated in the Morbihan Festival in late May, moving on to the Gaffers event in San Malo early June. Crews (Viv Head and Andrew Kelland) were swapped out between the two excellent events!

Regrettably only four boats registered for our “Self-timed Laps” in Cardiff Bay (our draw to sailing in Cardiff Bay each Thursday afternoon), but it has proven to be popular with those who have participated. We continue efforts to attract more participants!

The 2025 season drew to an abrupt close a few days after the August Bank Holiday as though a switch had been thrown!

The heavens opened, the winds blew, and the remaining three scheduled events of the season were all cancelled, CBYC Regatta, final Bristol Channel Cruise, and the already delayed Annual Gaffers Race in Cardiff Bay.

We held our AGM in Nov 2025 at CBYC and enjoyed an excellent presentation entitled “Underwater Surveying Operations for the Mary Rose 1975 – 2005”

At the AGM, the entire committee rolled over for yet another year, a lack of potential new volunteers / candidates being notable.

Since our AGM, the committee has approached various organisations, with a view to co-operating in events, in an attempt to swell our active base. Currently we are pursuing communications with the Drascombe Association, the Dinghy Cruising Association, and the Tall Ships (Wales) Trust, as well as of course the Cruisers section of Cardiff Bay Yacht Club.

Finally, our winter monthly series of Zoom talks / get-togethers is now well under way.

Andrew Kelland – BC Area Sec