



Presidents Report for the Old Gaffers Association Noth West Area AGM Feb 28, 2026

Introduction

Welcome to our 2026 AGM of the OGA NW Area. Before getting into the full content of our meeting, I would wish to thank the Ribble Cruising Club for again hosting us. The facilities are ideal for our AGM and the warm and positive welcome that we receive from the club and the excellent catering is, as ever warmly appreciated.

Review 2025

This time last year we were able to present an exciting and varied programme of sailing events for our membership. Additionally, we welcomed two new members Ann Ingham and Robin Ashcroft to our NW Committee to help share the workload and bring new expertise to our committee. We approved a policy to enable our area to spend money with Committee oversight and we also made amendments to our constitution aimed at developing our accessibility.

Unfortunately, all our planned activities apart from the Ullswater event we effected by poor weather conditions so the Lytham Rally, Arnside Classic Boat Regatta, and the Windermere Jetty Rally were called off with no sailing possible.

Our Ullswater event, which included the National Gaffling Championship, did go ahead. Those of you present or those who have read about the event in the Gaffers Log and other publications will be aware that that Ullswater event enjoyed superb sailing conditions over the August Bank Holiday!

The event was very well attended with over 40 OGA members taking part with a strong representation from our East Coast Area. Two excellent days cruising built up to the Gaffing Championship which took place on the Bank Holiday Monday. Our area put up several crews for the available Gafflings. Following heats, we had two boats in the final and we were finished in very creditable 3rd and 5th places.

Our year ended off in December with a social event based at the Lancaster Maritime Museum followed by a pub lunch in Lancaster.

Whilst we can be very proud of our achievements, we have learnt important lessons, particularly in staging a large national event. We did overcommit with some of our funding which with hindsight should have been taken on the OGA nationally. Also, in future we must develop a plan B in case of the weather proves unfit for sailing.

Membership

Over that past year our area membership has continued to grow and now stands at 45. This year has seen us consolidate membership in our existing areas and gain new members from the Wirral, Isle of Man and Ulverston.

Nationally we are the only area that has shown year on year growth, this is recognised, and our area is of increasing importance to the OGA. We have the largest freshwater fleet in the UK which is currently focussed on Windermere and Ullswater.

Sailing in small boats in the lake District is close to the hearts of OGA, who are influenced by the Swallows and Amazons books. Any development of membership and events in the Lake District will be noted.

Our sea going fleet has also developed and we now have active members sailing from the River Mersey, the Ribble estuary, Isle of Man and Barrow. It is hoped that these boats in conjunction with the two Crossfield boats, which are close to being sea ready will make up a varied and exciting sea going fleet.

Programme 2026

Our committee have recently met to look at the Northwest Area programme for 2026. To date we have identified

Wallasey – 13th May. Day sail with coffee and buffet (organiser Chris Pearson).

Lytham – May 30/31. As part of the Ribble Cruising Club Annual Regatta (organiser Ann Ingham).

Wallasey Regatta- 11/12 July. OGA Members Welcome.

Ullswater – TBC August? Hopefully OGA members on Ullswater will arrange an event.

Derwent Reservoir County Durham- 28-31 August National Gaffling Championship (details of venue <https://www.drsc.com.uk>).

Windermere Jetties Museum Oct 3-4 (Organisers Jeremy Lambert / Alasdair Simpson).

Pre-Christmas social event TBC.

In addition to these events there will be other sails cruises details of these will be circulated.

Developments

Most of you will be aware of the two local projects which will have a significant impact on the profile and activities over future years. Spray a Morecambe Bay Prawner built at the Crossfield Yard Arnside, and Seven a leisure boat, also a Crossfield boat, have been going through renovation- they will hopefully be out and about in Morecambe Bay this year, and we will be keeping our members informed about the progress of these two important local boats.

Beyond 2026 we have been preparing for the following year. At the recent National AGM at Harwich, we proposed that NW Area should host the 2027 National AGM . This was accepted and our plan is to stage the AGM at the Old England Hotel Bowness in January 2027. Help and participation from our local membership will be greatly appreciated!

Conclusion

2025 was a year of both frustrations and success. The frustrations have solely been down to the impact of the weather on our planned programme and should not detract from what has in other respects a successful year. Our members have sailed throughout the year, and we have updated and reported on activities in the Gaffers Log and locally through our NW Old Gaffers WhatsApp group.

2026 will hopefully be blessed with fairwinds and good sailing. I hope to meet up with as many of our membership, both new and established members to continue to develop the identity and the shared experience of the NW OGA.

I have been involved in our area for several years and served as both Treasurer, and now, in my current position as President. This will be my third year in this position and will be standing down as President at our corresponding meeting next year. I would like to thank the Committee and Membership for the support i have been given but mostly for the friendships I have developed and will continue to enjoy.

Thank you!

Jeremy Lambert

President Old Gaffers Association

Northwest Area