

Dublin Bay Old Gaffers Association Annual Report (October 2018 to September 2019)

The weather was not kind to our activities in 2019. Gale force winds in the days leading up to our main regatta in early June resulted in a reduction in the number of visiting boats attending. Regardless, the regatta weekend itself was very successful in all aspect. Conditions for the racing were perfect and after an exciting race Naomh Crónín won the Asgard Trophy.

We had planned to hold the Leinster Plate and Lifeboat Cup races in Howth on 31st August / 1st September but had to cancel due to weather conditions. We rescheduled to 5th and 6th October and although the Leinster Plate race started on Saturday 5th the race was abandoned after 40 minutes when gusts reached 35 knots. The fleet mustered as planned in Howth on Saturday night and during a reception in the Abbey Tavern we presented the RNLI with a cheque for €1,300 – the proceeds of contributions made by members during our winter talks series. Racing was also cancelled on Sunday due to the forecast of high winds. So neither the Leinster Plate nor the Lifeboat Cup were awarded in 2019.

Dublin Bay boats and crews had some fantastic cruising achievements during the summer. Sean Walsh in Tir na n'Og and Jimmy Murphy in Lady Beag both completed circumnavigations of Ireland. Paddy Murphy circumnavigated Ireland in Aigh Vie for the second time in two years, this time single-handed for most of the way. We were delighted to welcome Patrick Vyvyan-Robinson from Wales in Capraia who circumnavigated Ireland and Mary Gibbs (also from Wales) in Molly Cobbler, who sailed single-handed from Wales to west Kerry and back. Numerous other Dublin Bay boats completed cruises to the south coast, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and the north-west coast of Ireland.

We held, for the first time, an end-of-season sailing supper in Poolbeg on Friday 4th October. Following feedback received from those attending we plan for this to become a fixed item in our annual calendar. Our Christmas Party was held on 14th December and was a very well attended event (attracting a much larger audience than our membership) and features many very good and enthusiastic musicians. It generates much good-will for the DBOGA among the Poolbeg Yacht club members, the general sailing community in Dublin Bay and among the Ringsend community at large.

A couple of years ago the Irish Sea areas agreed that each year the main event of one area would be designated as 'the' Irish Sea event for that year and other areas would make a special effort to attend. We strongly support this concept but unfortunately no such event took place in 2019. Hopefully we can coordinate with other Irish Sea areas at the ACM / AGM and agree the designated event for 2020 and we look forward to a good contingent of Dublin Bay boats attending.

Overall the Dublin Bay Old Gaffers Association is in a healthy state. The membership numbers are steady and our finances are solid (we have a small surplus every year for the past few years). Our winter programme of talks consistently attracts a good attendance and raises significant funds for the RNLI. Our biggest challenge remains the number of Irish-based gaff-rigged boats participating in our events – we are not sure that it reaches the critical mass to ensure the *longer-term* vitality of the Dublin Bay area. In this context we were delighted to say that three new Dublin-based gaff-rigged boats attended our regatta in June for the first time.

Mark Sweetnam
Secretary, DBOGA