

Boat register report for 2019

The Boat register has continued to grow, with 60 boats being added to the register, 47 of which have been published for general viewing. Once a boat has been placed on the register it remains there, whether or not the owner stays with the organisation, so the register is now a long way from being merely a list of members boats. It is an internationally important archive, and several queries have come from overseas, requesting information about boats on the register. It has been a pleasure to deal with these requests, and those from closer to home.

The purchase earlier this year of a complete and searchable electronic version of Lloyds Register of Yachts has made it possible to confirm the identity older boats and their origins. Finding new custodians for the older boats on the register can be difficult, but the more information we have on a boat, and the better their story, the more likely it is for a new owner to become interested and take them on.

The register can also be used to generate handicaps for gaffers events, so long as the owners have provided sufficient details. Until we took on the register we were not aware that the OGA provides the handicaps for the gaffers class in the Round the Island Race, and the Cowes Classics races. It can be interesting to get e-mails requesting handicaps for entries to these events, especially when it involves trying to get information from non OGA members, but doing things like this raises the profile of the OGA in a positive way.

Another way we were involved in raising the OGA profile occurred in November when we attended the National Maritime Heritage forum in Glasgow. We met both local and national groups who are engaged with maritime heritage at all levels. Many of the people we talked to had heard of the OGA, and those that had not were interested in what we did, and envious of our not having any premises to maintain! We discovered that a disconcerting number of maritime museum professionals were not familiar with yachting and did our best to point them at the living heritage which is the OGA.

With the main OGA web site coming to the end of its natural life we are looking for a new home for the online boat register and exploring options to keep it accessible. With well over three thousand boats on the register we can not allow it to disappear and lose all the hard work that went into creating it. We will provide a demo of an alternative browse capability and outline our suggested way forward at the meeting. If you want to have a look before the meeting you can find it here. <https://oga-browse-boats.herokuapp.com/>

This is very much a proof of concept and what we can do with it is restricted by the current data base structure. We would welcome ideas on richer ways of representing boat data.

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