

Boat Register Editor's Report

What We Do

The Register

In the early 1970s John Scarlett, the first OGA Secretary, started collecting data on members' boats. The records have grown to include over 3,500 craft, forming a unique record. Mainly gaff rigged, old and new, workboats and yachts, the Register also contains classic Bermudan yachts and motorboats. Data have been stored electronically since the 1980s and in 2016 the OGA launched the register online. Whilst primarily a record of members boats the register has become an important historical record of working and leisure craft and the editors are happy to receive details about interesting boats regardless of their association with the OGA.

OGA Members can list boats 'For Sale' at no additional charge.

The Editors

Day to Day Work

Approving (or requesting clarification) online forms for new boats or updates

Entering new boats onto the database from boat register forms.

Following up members who have not returned their boat register form.

Helping members to update details of their boats.

Replying to requests for more information on boats on our register.

Accepting requests by members to sell their boats

Other Regular Work

Writing a report for each Gaffers Log

Writing a report for the Association Committee/Association AGM

Contacting areas for up to date information on:

The boats regularly attending their events.

Boat data, especially measurements for handicap calculation.

Calculating handicaps for racing.

Calculating handicaps for the Island Sailing Club for their Round the Island Race.

Going through the old paper records and updating data on boats

Development of the Register

Converting and loading paper record to the online register.

Cooperation with other organisations with a view to sharing data

Cooperation with organisations who could assist with the development of the register by supply of information and effort.

The forms on the site don't modify the register, they just send the suggested modifications to the editors for review. I'll send you some examples of the emails generated from the forms people submit.

What we said last year

Statistics

We now have 3,593 boats visible on the register, including the 38 boats added during the year. Of these, 913 have pictures, up from 774 on the old register and the total number of pictures is up from 1,764 to 2,140. Of these new pictures, around 180 were professionally digitised from the David Cade collection of transparencies and the remainder have been provided by members.

In terms of boats for sale, we carried over 49 for sale records from the old database although some of these had been sold without the OGA being informed. About 1/2 of these had been for sale in 2014 when the original database was created. Around 1/2 dozen of these sold during the year. Around 18 boats were put up for sale on the register during the year and we believe more than 20 OGA boats have been bought during the year, although not all of the sales were made through the register. We currently have 43 boats for sale.

Assignments

1. Introduce a Website Member Login facility in order to see names of boat owners in the Boat Register.
2. Investigate if the Lloyds Register could be put online for logged-in members.

Over the last year

Statistics

1. Around 100 "enquire about this boat" requests
2. 78 new boats added by 1-1-22
3. 29 for sale records created, 12 of which sold within the year. 5 boats which were for sale at the beginning of the year sold. 31 boats currently for sale.
4. 4 modified or added designers
5. 9 modified or added builders
6. Around 2,000 detailed changes to boat entries

Assignments & other improvements

1. Integration with the main OGA site. Initially the boat register was very separate from the main site and this led to some poor interactions. For example, there was a big white space below the register and above the footer. We've changed how it works now and it's much better

2. Performance – we've changed how data is stored and fetched to make the site more reliable and often quicker
3. Managing updates – we've integrated the new boat form into the main application and added better update forms. There is still more to do here
4. Login – it is now possible to create a login from the main boat register page. This is completely separate from the officer's login and anyone can register.
 - a. Logged in users don't have to enter an email when filling forms in.
 - b. We can associate a login with a membership. Logged-in members now get to see the historical and current ownership details for boats.
5. Lloyds Register – the copyright owners of the digitised Lloyds Register are not currently willing to make any of their data available online. We are working on ways of making it easier for members to know if their boats have useful data in the Lloyds Register so they can ask us for the details. We'd like to prototype something to demonstrate to the copyright owners a feature that would promote their product rather than eroding their revenue stream.

Plans for the coming year

Curation

Now we have all the owner data we have prepared, the only data left from the old boat register not currently accessible is the engine data. We won't make this a priority to add but we expect to get around to adding it.

The owner data is very patchy, and we know lots more is available, some already online in the detail and for-sale records, some in Lloyds register and more accessible to research or known to members. We'll work to improve this aspect of the register and we'd love to get help from members. There isn't a specific form for this, at least not yet, but an email or a letter is fine.

The 'for sale' data is also a good source for improving the descriptions, but it takes some editorialising to make a good read that will still be appropriate into the future.

Systems

Our next priority is to improve the logged-in experience for the editors. We currently have some processes for setting the owner of a boat, setting the image gallery, etc. but we will be moving all of these onto the main boat register application so anyone who is given editor privileges will be able to manage the register.

We will also start work on incorporating features to support the activities for OGA60.

The first part of this will be to add a 'register your boat' feature for RBC60 and the small boats cross-country event. We can add other events like the main OGA60 gathering on the East Coast and local events if you want us to.

Part of this work will be adding a general facility for defining fleets. We currently think these will be associated with people so anyone can have a list of boats they are interested in. We'll let people have private and public fleets and RBC60 could be a public fleet 'owned' by the President for example.

We'll also add a boat tracking feature. This will include incorporating the map view we built for RBC50 and adding data sources for AIS and manual position reporting. Owners will be able to make their boat's position public or private.

Having logins will allow us to do much more. Previous suggestions have included:

1. Following links from one boat to the other boats owned by the same person
2. A crew-finding service
3. A crew position offering service

The technology we've used for the logins is a very general-purpose industry standard and can be used for more than just the boat register. We could use it to help manage area events for example, so people didn't have to enter their details if they were already signed in. Let us know what you are interested in.