

OGA Small Boats Report for 2023 ACM/AGM

I think it is fair to say that the OGA Small Boat community made some very positive steps back towards normality in 2022 following the dreadful pandemic, although I am not sure that people have quite got back to travelling far and wide with their boats, yet. It was good to see that many of the well-established small boats events took place, again, in 2022, but particularly pleasing to see some new ones, too: Solent Area held a rally at Lymington and NW Area held events for small boats at Arnside and South Windermere. I know some event organisers were disappointed with the numbers of visiting boats that attended their events. The only advice I can give them is to get their dates into the calendar early whilst avoiding conflicts with other events as far as possible. There are many channels that we can use to publicise events, once the dates are fixed, and I am very happy to help event organisers to do this.

The Gaffling 4.1 project made some good steps forward in 2022. The number of boats either built or “in build” is now seven. The last one in this series was built by a group of enthusiastic youngsters from Arnside SC who built the hull of their boat in the workshop of Fyne Boat Kits, our new kit supplier, at the end of the summer. The full story of this build is in the Gaffers Log. Group builds, particularly with groups of young people, were always part of the Gaffling vision, so projects like this one are really good to see. I understand that the Arnside boat, “Jabberwocky”, is currently being painted and varnished in preparation for launch at start of next season. In the NE Area, the second school-built Gaffling build now has the shell of the boat and all the materials in place to complete the project in the new year.

With OGA 60, 2023 is shaping up to be a very busy very one for the OGA small boat community. I expect many of the usual events will take place but special events for OGA 60 are also being planned to take place in Cardiff Bay, Ullswater and Langstone Harbour, to say nothing of the “main event” on the East Coast. At the latter, I anticipate there will be opportunities for people to sail their own small boats and, also, to take part in the first ever Gaffling 4.1 Championships. For people with their own Gaffling, this will be a great opportunity to test it against others, but I understand that boats are also going to be made available for anyone to take part. Last, but not least, 2023 is a “Morbihan year” and I expect there will, yet again, be a good turnout of OGA small boats at this amazing event.

I have thought for a while that it would be good if, in addition to our organised events, we could have some “pop-up” events for small boats – ones where a few boats just agree to get together at a certain place for a sail with no other organisation. SW Area member, Mark Turner, has suggested to me that having an OGA Small Boats WhatsApp group would be a good way of facilitating this, and general small boat chat, and has kindly set one up. I think this is a great idea and I will be “launching” it in my next Log article in the New Year.

David Bewick.

OGA Small Boats Secretary

