

Bristol Channel Area Report – ACM Jan 2023

Gaffer activities in the Bristol Channel Area in 2022 got underway under new management, both President and Secretary position incumbents having changed out simultaneously at the AGM at the end of 2021: Not ideal, but happily, previous incumbents were still around to help out!

We have enjoyed a busy season on the water with six Bristol Channel Day-cruises starting out from Cardiff Bay, from May through to September, with a total of twelve boats taking part in at least one trip. A Spring and Autumn series of races was held in Cardiff Bay, but participation was noticeably low. Timing / logistics of these events will be amended for the 2023 season such that on water activities roll over more conveniently to an evening meal and drink.

Local OGA boats attended the Welsh Coast Rally in Cardiff Bay organised by the Bristol Channel Yachting Association, and happily we were presented with the BCYA Association of the Year award. Further, we were represented at the Tall Ships Wales Seafair Haven 2022 event, held on the Milford Waterway which included a trip on the Topsail Schooner Johanna Lucretia.

A Jubilee Family Celebration Day at Cardiff Bay Yacht Club in June 2022 was pretty well blown away with F6-F7 gale. However, four fearless (feckless?) gaffers braved the elements to take part in the scheduled Parade of Sail, complete with trombone accompaniment!

The new officers soon realised that much planning work was required for the 2023 OGA 60 celebrations, both the Round Britain Cruise (RBC 60) 'Party Port' event, and a Small Boat Event. Thus a planning committee was established locally roping in previous area officers and others.

Our Area Party Port will be based at Neyland: The fleet will be in Milford Haven on the weekend of 19th-21st May 2023. We will be organising a warm welcome and entertainment both at the Marina and also at nearby Neyland Yacht Club. A parade of sail by classic lifeboats will escort the gaffers leaving Neyland down the Haven estuary.

We are inviting traditional sailing boats to a weekend in Cardiff Bay to continue to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the OGA on the 14th-16th July, 2023. The event will be hosted by Cardiff Bay Yacht Club and will be suitable for trailer sailors, but larger vessels arriving by sea are also welcome. Activities will include locking out through the barrage for a short cruise, a river raid, a bay race, a log-boat race, and opportunities to sample the bay-side amenities, together with social events in the yacht club.

Our "Severn Tidings" (Spring and Autumn editions) newsletter continues to keep our members up to date and is available on our OGA Area website, along with all our events.

Our local AGM was held at the Severn Area Rescue Association (SARA) , Beachley, directly beneath the carriageway of the Severn suspension bridge! A fascinating venue, and this was followed by an excellent lunch at the Boat Inn in Chepstow.

We are excited at the 2023 offerings in the Area, and hope that boats and crew from other areas will be attracted to our Small Boat event in Cardiff Bay in July, and why not drop in to Neyland in May?!

Fair winds.

Andrew Kelland OGA BC Sec, and Susanne Newbold OGA BC President