

BC Area – Presidents Report - ACM Jan 2024

2023 will certainly be a year to remember as the 60th Anniversary of the Old Gaffers Association. The festivities began in April on the East Coast and 17 vessels duly arrived in Neyland for our Bristol Channel Party Port Event in May.

Our committee, led by David Botterill; did a fantastic job of organising the weather as well as a highly enjoyable three days of events. Visits to castles and museums went down really well with the skippers of the vessels! Evening entertainment and food was of a good quality, and was well received by all 50 or so participants.

The BC Area also celebrated the anniversary with a Small Boat Weekend in Cardiff Bay Yacht Club. 23 boats registered (55 persons), and many activities were organised with Charlie Harris in charge both on and off the water. Unfortunately, the weather was not kind but the entertainment continued, and a good time was had by all despite there being NO sailing! The homemade log boat race was the only sailing that took place, and was a huge success.

These events were complemented on the water by the Cardiff Bay Racing Series, the Bristol Channel Cruises in Company and the Annual Gaffer Race, but the weather has not been kind this year so unfortunately not all of the planned events took place.

Evening entertainment has been well supported in Cardiff Bay Yacht Club, be it dinners following the Bay Race Series, or other social events including an in-house Sea-Shanty evening with an esoteric mixture of instruments being played by Gaffers and their families.

Zoom meetings are held over the winter period (November through March) to keep everyone in touch. Topics presented vary from Sailing on the Norfolk Broads, traversing England from the Bristol Channel to London, to experiences with an electrically powered Crabber Pilot Cutter 30.

The Area Section has an active committee largely based in Cardiff, but it is regrettably a fact that there is little reported activity much outside the confines of Cardiff Bay, other than the cruises which also originate there.

It has proven to be a challenge to engage meaningfully with Gaffers based in other locations within the Area, be it further West within Wales, or on the English coastline of the Channel. This continues to be a conundrum.

Susanne Newbold