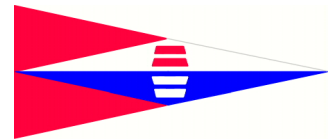


MARCH 2016



the BEAMER

Easter Edition

Featuring:

- ⇒ Update from the Commodore
- ⇒ The new Handicap system explained
- ⇒ Racing starts from the pier head
- ⇒ New Year's cruise—with photos!

And more.....!

Hello, everyone!!

Welcome to the Easter edition of the Beamer, published just in time for the 2016 sailing season. As I write this I'm desperately hoping that the weather forecast holds true and we get the warm weather we've been promised—at least for a few days, enough for me to polish the topsides!

With the new season rapidly approaching we have a few topical articles in this edition, which should help you on your way and ensure your racing and cruising is as fun as it should be.

Commodore's Easter Update

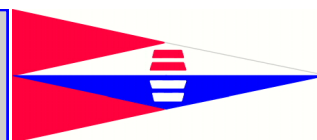
All quiet on the western (well, eastern) front, I thought, as I sat down to draft this season's opening article.

I soon worked out that I'm seeing the start of the season from the sheltered position of Commodore. All around me, folk are doing great things to ensure that 2016 is a busy and exciting year.

Before we even reach the water, we can see lots going on in and around the marina. The roof and sides of the 'Sheds' have been ripped off and even the concrete floor has been broken up - all to be replaced by modern materials. The restored building will then house, amongst other things, an expanded Bosun's Locker and the Admin office. Just opposite, the Cafe has been re-furbished ... and round the corner the engineering workshops have been re-housed in bigger premises.



Commodore's Easter Update, cont.



As for the proposed Hub building and our new clubhouse, Planning Consent has been granted and feasibility studies relating to the upgrading of the marina infrastructure (meaning sewage, water etc) have been completed but the talks between the operator and Edinburgh City Council are still 'work in progress'. We await the outcome with interest.

Down around the pontoons, a dozen new 12 metre berths have been added (I hear twenty 'new to Port Edgar' yachts have applied for berths, with more than half of them in the 30' - 40' range) ... plus, over the winter, the tyre barrier has been dragged ashore, refurbished and fitted out with new chains and moorings.

Up top, our new starter box has been given the onceover; to further weatherproof it and to set up a new lighting system. If the lights pass muster, they will replace the starter flags. Watch this space.

As for the 'on the water' action, I'll draw your attention to the recent email from the PEYC Welcome Team. It neatly set out all the sailing highlights lined up for 2016. These included the ever popular 707 Training programme (already started!), the 707 Edinburgh Cup weekend, the Port Edgar Dinghy Regatta weekend (staged jointly with Port Edgar watersports). Also in May, a yacht racing coaching/training event is scheduled, as is the start of Youth Sailing.

Into the middle of the season we host the prestigious East of Scotland heat for the UK National and European keelboat racing event.

Away from racing, there'll be all the usual cruising activities taking place, including four 'cruise in company' days (see the handbook for dates). With East Coast Sailing Week being held in the Tay this year, some of the dyed in the wool racers are already planning their cruise - a trip round that well-kent corner of east Fife.

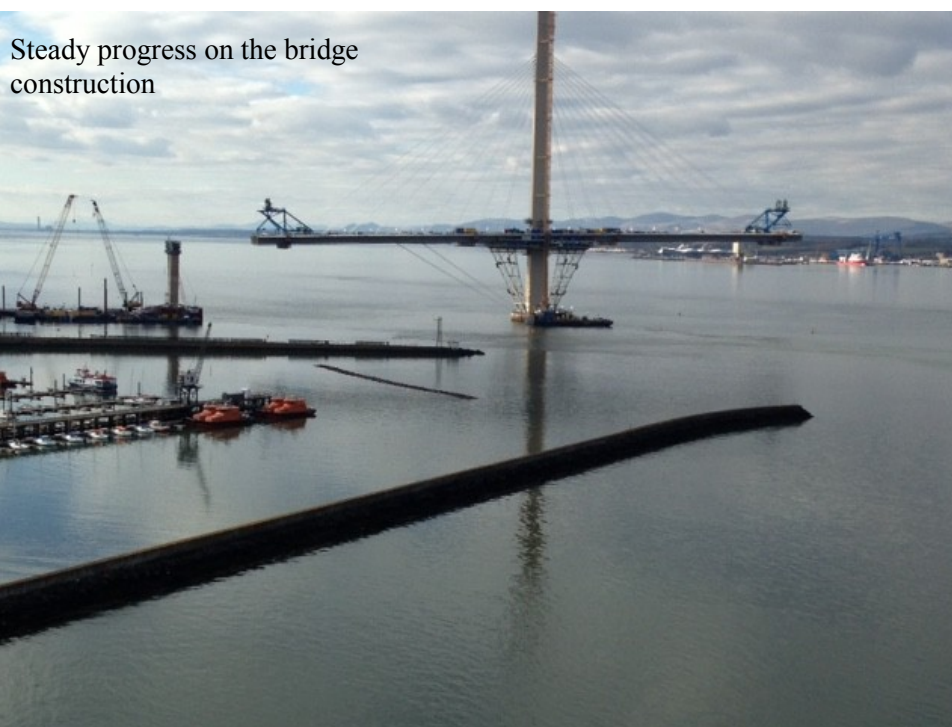
Finally, three Sundays have been set aside for fun events. More nearer the time.

So there you have it. You'll be pleased to hear your Commodore doesn't feel run ragged - thanks to the sterling work of those around me. Isn't that how it's supposed to be?

Then there's the small matter of my own sailing. My boat's ready to go in (next week). It just remains for my Direct Debit to kick in and my handbook to arrive (any day now) ... and I'm up and running.

Terry Kirchin

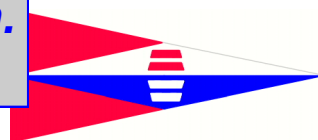
Commodore



Steady progress on the bridge construction

Hot tips for race officers for the 2016 season.

Jim Scott.



PEYC Pier Start Line for 2016

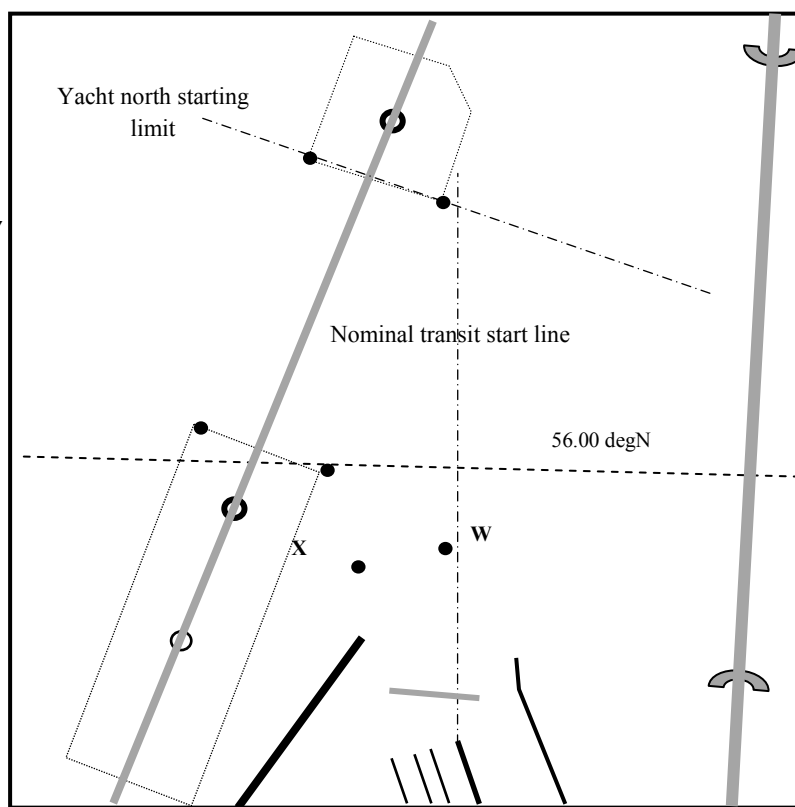
Shifting our shore-based starts from the East Breakwater to the Main Pier early last year has prompted a fresh look at our starting arrangements. PEYC has long used a transit defined start line, intended to be set at right angles to the prevailing SW-NE winds but with some up-tide bias to compensate for tidal currents. Mark W, the ODM (Outer Distance Mark) for yachts, has been a constant problem for various reasons:

- ⇒ It is limited to 56.00 degN due to the shipping channel, giving a short ~300m line
- ⇒ It has often been dragged east by strong ebb currents off Port Edgar
- ⇒ It is almost never in the 'right' place for a correctly set transit line
- ⇒ For every metre that it's ahead of the transit, it shortens the usable line by a metre
- ⇒ If it is more than a boat length behind the transit, it can be ignored, letting smart skippers sometimes make an advantageous 'Corinthian' start from across the river

Looking at para 2.2 of the PEYC SIs for 2016, Main Pier starts will still use a transit line for both dinghies and yachts **but there will be no outer distance mark for yachts**. However, yachts **may not start any further north than the transit defined by the yellow buoys at the SW & SE corners of the exclusion zone around the central tower of the new bridge**.

This gives a longer start line (~700m) for yachts, and allows the race officer to set the transit correctly without fudging it to be close to an ODM. **Mark W will be** laid due north of the Main Pier, closer to the Marina in less depth and current, as **the ODM for dinghy starts and will define the finish line for both dinghies and yachts**. With the new high intensity LED strip lights on the Race Box flag staff and the transit pole, it will be much easier to sight the transit from well across the channel. **Removing mark Y and changing mark X from RED to YELLOW** should also make it easier to identify mark W while approaching from the east.

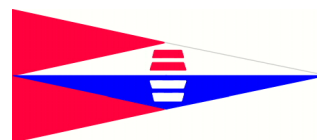
Jim Scott - PEYC Sailing Secretary



Hot tips for Race Officers, continued.

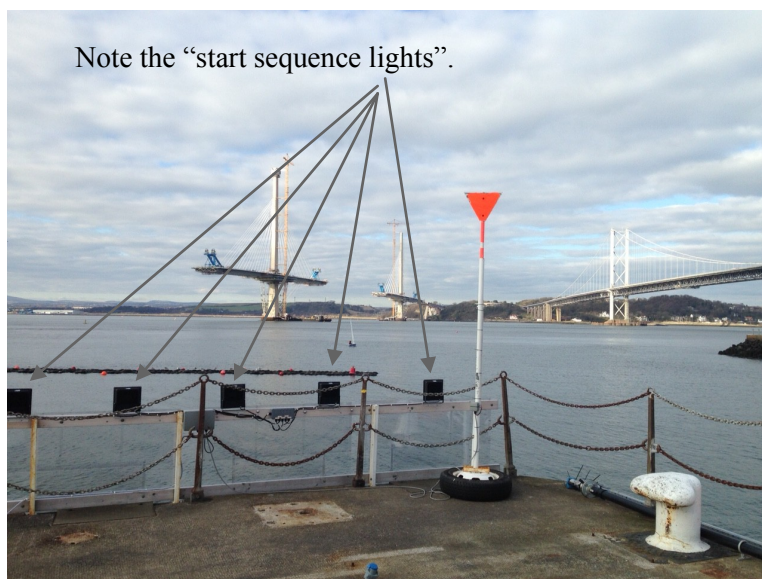
Jim Scott

MARCH 2016

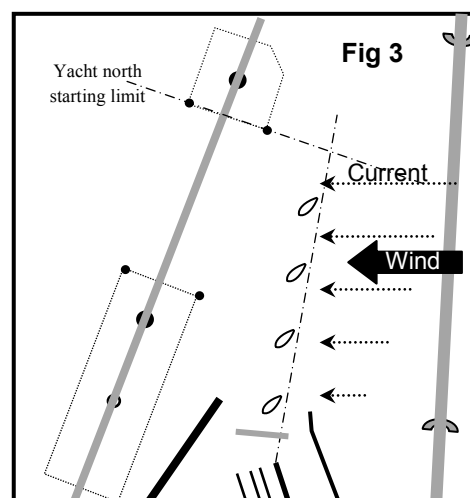
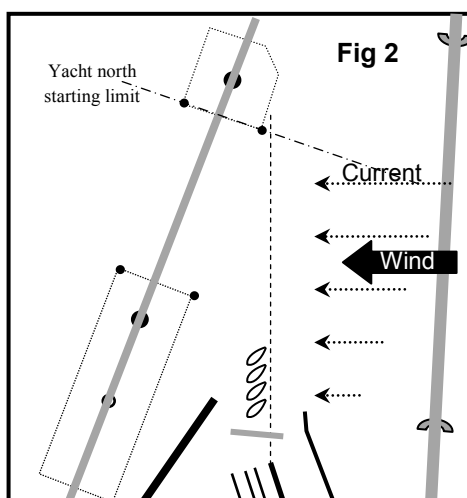
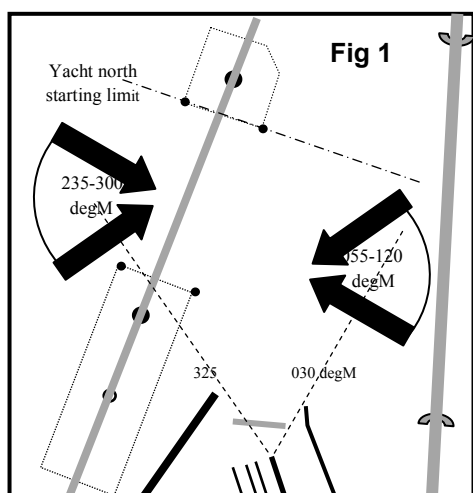


How do we set a Transit Start Line?

Race Officers should set a 'fair' start line so that the fleet doesn't tend to bunch up at one end with boats pushed over the line, potentially obscuring it and causing a General Recall. For PEYC committee boat starts, the RO will normally lay a line at right angles to the wind using two marks, giving the fleet the option to spread out along it. For shore based starts off the Main Pier at Port Edgar, the RO has to set a 'transit line' using a movable transit pole. At present all our yacht courses from the Main Pier go east and the south tower exclusion zone limits how far west the transit can be positioned. Once the new bridge is complete, **fig 1** shows that the breakwaters will limit the transit line direction to between 325 and 030 degM, enabling the line to be set at right angles to winds of 055-120 degM and 235-300 degM. Although these sectors cover only about a third of the compass, they include most of the probable wind directions at Port Edgar, given our prevailing SW-NE winds.



Anyone sailing out of Port Edgar will be aware of the strong tides, particularly on the ebb, and the current gradient across the channel. If the RO simply sets the transit line at right angles to the wind, **fig 2** illustrates why the fleet is likely to bunch at one end of the line to avoid adverse flood current. To encourage the fleet to spread out along the line, the RO should swing the transit 'up-tide' from right angles to the wind as shown in **fig 3**. In that situation, skippers have a choice between an up-wind start position with clean air but against stronger current, versus a down-wind start position with disturbed air but against less current. For an ebb tide situation, the RO should swing the transit 'up-tide' to the west from right angles to the wind. How far to swing the transit?

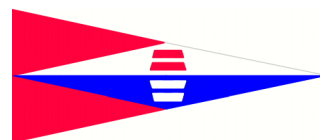


Well, the stronger the current and lighter the wind, the more the transit should be angled up-tide from right angles to the wind. When it is your turn as RO on the Main Pier, check out the Race Officer Manual for more detailed advice.

A note from our hosts at Granton, January 2016.

(with thanks to Maria Walker).

MARCH 2016



What a great social event it was down at the club yesterday! *(writes Adrian Shield, Commodore RFYC, 3rd January 2016).* And how wrong was the weather forecast? The only part correct was the wind direction. The wind expected to be gusting 7 or 8 only managed a steady 3 touching 4 and was perfect for a winter's sail with the tide with you. Two tacks to get down to Granton and a run back.



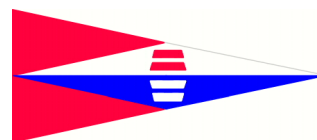
A handful of boats brought down some 60 visitors, though at least one came by bike and another by car. Coupled with a good sprinkling of our members (including an Out of Port member from Canada) it was a very jolly occasion enjoyed by all. The bar was busy and most people tucked into the hot soup and bacon rolls provided by our valiant

volunteers. The smiles on sailors' faces made the effort worthwhile and Royal Forth looks forward to welcoming Port Edgar back soon!



The new handicapping system explained.

Phil Walter



FYCA Progressive Handicaps

The FYCA is planning to introduce an improved version of the current yacht handicapping system. This article briefly explains (in layman's terms) the background to the change and what it means to you.

FYCA Handicap Background

The FYCA Handicap Policy is to use a performance based handicapping system. For many years the RYA Portsmouth Yardstick Scheme (PY) was used. This is no longer supported for yachts by the RYA but we continue to use the principles of that system and in particular how the performance of each yacht is assessed. Without specifying how, the PY scheme recommends that handicaps are adjusted based on performance. Until now the FYCA made adjustments at the discretion of the handicap committee. This is both time consuming and inevitably has an element of subjectivity within it. Also as a consequence of this being time consuming only a small number of handicaps are reviewed and adjusted. Late last summer discussions were held on how we might improve the way that handicaps are adjusted. The aim was to look for some method that could be applied to all yachts and make the best use of the performance data we gather. The outcome was a formulaic method of calculating the handicap adjustment. Trials were run on the existing performance data and after some experimentation a formula was devised. This combines more rapid adjustments for new yachts with few results yet slowly follows the performance trend of yachts with plenty of results. A final step applies an allowance for crew skill before arriving at the new handicap.

Setting Base or Initial Handicap

There is no change to the way that skippers apply for handicaps or in the way that the Handicap Committee set the initial or base handicap (before any race result data is available).

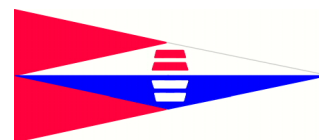
Performance Database

The handicap committee maintains a database of yacht race results on the Forth. This data has been collected for nearly 20 years and now contains information on over 1000 yachts and over 35,000 yacht starts. This gives us true performance data that can be analysed and used to adjust the handicaps.

Crew Skill

In an ideal world the handicaps would be calculated after removing the contribution made by the crew (thereby handicapping the yachts itself). Unfortunately no means of statistical analysis of the results to isolate the crew skill element from mixed fleet racing

Handicapping explained, cont.



has been found. The crew skill element could simply be ignored but that would penalise those well trained crews and reward the under-performing crews. The feedback from the racing skippers made it clear that some recognition of crew skill was required. A simple view was taken that if the yacht performs better than base handicap there is a positive crew skill and they should keep some of that advantage and vice versa.

FYCA Progressive Handicaps

The update formula uses statistical analysis of the results data to find a range of values in which, with a certain probability, the theoretical performance of the yacht lies. As might be expected this range gets smaller the more results that are available and when those results are more consistent. Within that range the handicap is fine tuned. The fine tuning feeds back the individual race performances to update an achieved performance. It is similar to how the rolling handicap at Port Edgar works but in this case it is constrained within the range of probable values.

When the time comes to publish an updated handicap list, each yacht's achieved performance is examined and compared against the handicap that the base handicap committee set for the boat. This difference is made up of yacht performance and crew skill. Approximately two thirds of this difference is then applied to the base handicap to generate the new handicap (one third is the crew skill allowance).

Update Frequency

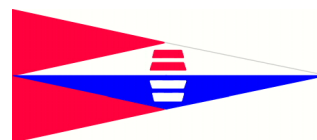
Any performance based system needs to make updates regularly but doing so too frequently would turn this into a Rolling Handicap. A balance needed to be struck and it was decided to update the handicap list twice per year. This would occur once before the start of the season when new boats arriving over the winter could be included and once before the major regattas (Edinburgh Regatta, PEYC Regatta and East Coast Sailing Festival). The latter would give a chance for boats new to the Forth to have their handicap reviewed prior to the regattas.

FYCA Web-site

As before the handicaps will be published on the FYCA web-site under the racing section (<http://www.fyca.org.uk/racing.htm>). Currently there is a provisional set of handicaps for 2016. Subject to acceptance at the FYCA Spring Delegates meeting these will be confirmed. New yachts will be added to the list when they apply for and are granted an FYCA handicap. All other handicaps will be updated twice a year and the new list posted on the web-site.

Further details of the Progressive Handicaps and an updated Handicap Policy will be added if this handicap system is formally adopted by the FYCA.

Handicapping explained, cont.



Timetable for Adoption

The FYCA recently held a seminar to introduce the improved handicap scheme to the membership. A chance is now available for any feedback to be received before the FYCA Spring Delegates meeting (21st April 2016). At that meeting the FYCA membership will take a vote on the adoption of the FYCA Progressive Handicap Scheme. This is in time for the first FYCA Open event (Bosuns Locker FIG Race) on 1st May.

No Change to PEYC Closed Races.

These changes have little impact on the PEYC handicaps. The rolling handicaps will continue from their end of 2015 values. The trophy and open events run on open handicaps will use these published FYCA Progressive Handicaps.

What Differences Will You See?

Handicaps will be updated twice a year. There may be a modest change to your handicap as this new scheme is introduced but future adjustments are expected in the order of 1 or 2 points for yachts that have an established set of results. Some people may see no change in their boat's handicap.

Similar yachts (which used to race off the same handicap) will now have their own handicaps. Under most measurement rating systems similar boats (not true one-designs) were given different handicaps, so this is consistent.

Finally there should be some close racing.

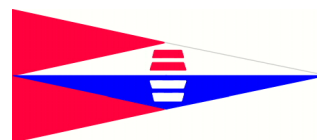
Phil Walter

FYCA Handicap Committee Chairman.

March 2016

Getting to grips with a bit of rope work.

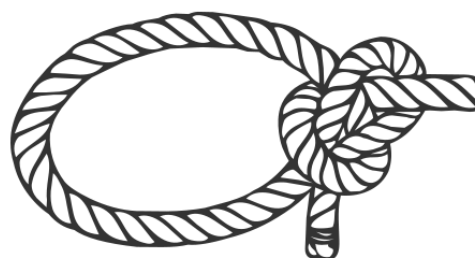
Dominic Ashmole



They say I need to be able to do it blindfolded behind my back. Fat chance. The little rabbit comes out of the hole, wanders around for a bit, forgets the tree, and visits a friend in a different hole. Cute and Bambiesque, perhaps. But not a knot.

Or that man: I poked him in the eye. He got me back. And from then on, things began to unravel.

The taste of gritted teeth, and the sweat of tension. I shift uncomfortably as younger and more attractive souls spin wonderful webs of rope. Perhaps they're Houdini's harem.

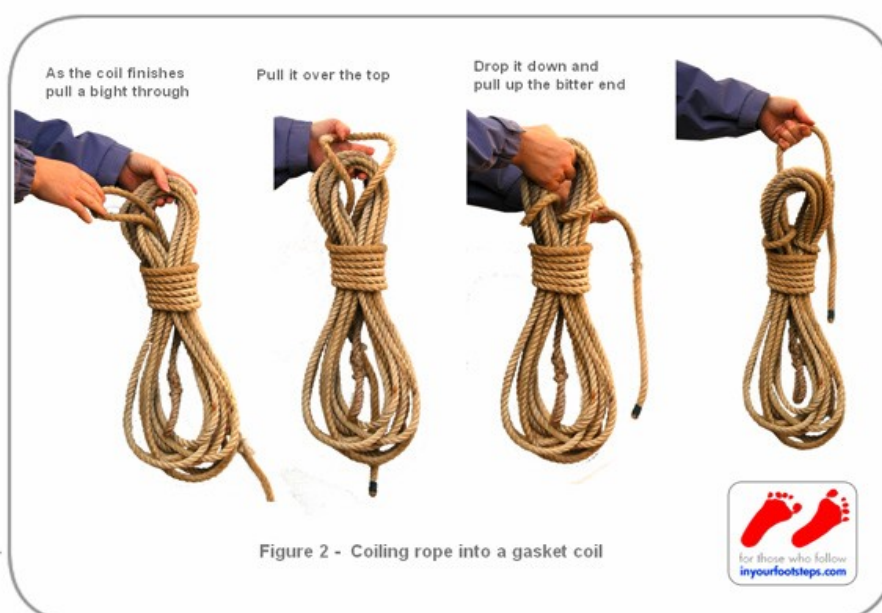


On the video, old Tom clenches a kind of fist and pulls the rabbit out of the hat with a deft gesture. My kids pause briefly in incredulity: "You have a DVD about knots?! You're old."

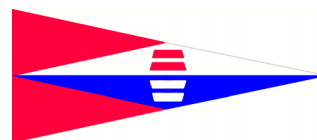
I take some small satisfaction in coiling the rope half-neatly, winding round it tightly, flicking the hank with each turn, and – finally I have learnt how – locking the loose end in place to produce a robust, long-lived coil. I've wrapped it up.

Tight. Secure.

Done it!



Dominic Ashmole



END PAGE!!

So, that's all folks. Thank you to all who supplied articles. I guarantee that the summer edition will contain articles from the dinghy fraternity, the cruising lot, maybe even the rowers!

So, if anyone has any ideas for future articles please do contact me—you don't need to provide copy (but it's great if you do!) Please bear me and potential Beamer articles in mind if you take a photo or do something particularly mentionable! And you don't need to wait for me to send out a plea for copy, just e-mail it to me while it's still fresh in your mind.

Have a great season's sailing and see you out on the water!

Catherine

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