

Forum

‘Conflicts in Inshore Waters’

Captain I. Bower *writes*

I am not a yachtsman, not even a yacht owner, but I must take issue with Mr Bartlett¹ as I was Master of a small coaster, up to a year ago, trading mostly on the West Coast of Scotland. I am now in command of a heavy-lift Ro-Ro vessel trading UK/Continent and my sentiments have not altered.

I apologize for not speaking particularly about the Solent area, but Mr Bartlett *was* speaking about merchant vessels in general – albeit large ones. His views were directed towards that popular stretch of water, but the West Coast of Scotland – the Inner and Outer Hebrides – is equally as popular, and I refute his statements on the ‘reasonably high intellectual calibre’ and the ‘responsible decision making’ of yachtsmen and women. Their ‘hobby’ may be expensive, but what of the numerous yachts that have been hired by the week or fortnight – what about their training? There have been numerous occasions during voyages within and without the Islands when I have had to take avoiding action for a yacht due entirely to its bad management and not, as Mr Bartlett will have it, to the density of traffic.

Quite probably, in the Solent, yacht owners are responsible – but there are other sailing areas around the UK – and I cannot say the same for some of the craft I have encountered. Although I do not entirely endorse Commander Booth’s views,² I do believe a more balanced view should be sought.

REFERENCES

¹ Bartlett, T. (1995). ‘Conflicts in inshore waters’ – a yachtsman’s view. *This Journal*, **48**, 154.

² Booth, P. (1994). Conflicts in inshore waters. *This Journal*, **47**, 208.

KEY WORDS

1. Small boat navigation. 2. Safety 3. Vessel traffic services. 4. Collision avoidance.