



# THE CLYDE YACHT CLUBS' ASSOCIATION

Hon Secretary, RNCYC Clubhouse, Rhu, Helensburgh G84 8NG

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## NEWSLETTER

November 2013

With the 2013 season essentially behind us, the winter months give us an opportunity to consider successes and failures in the year gone by as well as opportunities in 2014. We offer you the following thoughts from the Association's point of view:

### VHF Ch 72 abuse (Clyde)

Our efforts via Ofcom Scotland delivered a result on this. The offenders were confronted and their behaviour has been sorted out. We recommend ongoing vigilance, and the Association will be happy to re-engage with Ofcom in the event of other problems being identified.

### MCA operational changes

Despite worries that transfer of operations from Greenock to Bangor would adversely affect MCA effectiveness, we are unaware of anything other than a few initial teething problems. Reducing public sector budgets will inevitably demand change, and we must respect that. Any adverse consequences for safety at sea must, on the other hand, be avoided.

Transfer out of the old Navy Buildings at Greenock has had a few other consequences. VHF antennae have been relocated, and we are aware of a few "blind spots" (should that be "deaf"?), particularly in the river east of Greenock. Input from clubs or club members with any evidence of wider adverse effects should let us know. In addition, signal lights for the Protected Channel in and out of the Gareloch have been modified. Details of revised Port Closure signalling can be found on the QHM website at <http://www.qhm.mod.uk/clyde/port/closures> .

### Harbour Authority matters

Although QHM has now been transferred to civilian operation, personnel changes have been minimal. Effective Port Safety Meetings are conducted with the involvement of the Association and other affected parties.

It is disappointing to have to report a major incident with a yacht interfering with the free passage of a nuclear submarine. Not only was this a risk for the submarine, but given that it was a US Navy Vessel then it is fair to reflect that the yacht was probably at considerable risk too!



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Clubs are reminded of the need to advise their members of the need to observe the instructions of escorting craft at all times. The adverse consequences of incidents have the potential to affect far more of us than just the foolhardy few who ignore the guidance given.

In a similar vein, another incident took place in Clydeport's area of jurisdiction, involving several yachts participating in an evening race. A formal complaint was raised by the pilot who was in charge of berthing the cargo vessel involved. In this instance the club's Flag Officers took prompt and timely action to reprimand the club members who were to blame.

Incidents like this - and think of the "pink spinnaker at Cowes" - do absolutely nothing other than damage our collective reputation.

#### Woodfarm Rock, Kyles of Bute

Despite all the publicity there have, regrettably, been at least two more major groundings this summer in the South Passage, Burnt Isles, at Woodfarm Rock. We remain firmly of the opinion that a beacon on the rock would be a significant improvement compared with the current green buoy which moves around in the tidal stream. Our thanks to the major clubs who have offered to help contribute - if necessary - to the cost of installing a beacon. We are committed to working with Clydeport to find a solution to this long-standing problem.

#### The Crown Estate

Clubs are reminded that The Crown Estate has a marine stewardship fund from which grants may be made for projects which enhance the general shore-related facilities in support of the marine environment. In the first instance clubs should contact Dr Darren Hirst at Bidwells, Perth who manage The Crown Estate business in Scotland. These funds are particularly suited to small "improvement" projects which can be implemented quickly.

#### Handicapping

We have had little visibility and zero feedback regarding any use of the new NHC system offered via RYA and RORC Rating at the start of the 2013 season. We await further information from RYA.

In the meantime, and as previously advised, the results software providers implemented regimes for the management of rolling ("progressive") handicaps. We are unaware of any emerging enthusiasm for this style of handicap racing, but clubs who have had positive experiences are invited to give us details so that we can share them with other Association members.



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As always, clubs are also invited to provide feedback to the CYCA Handicap Committee regarding any perceived handicap anomalies within the fleets they have racing. These should be passed to Liz Redstone in the CYCA Office, and Liz will ensure proper progression with the Handicap Committee.

#### 2014 Calendar

Thanks to all who have provided feedback against the initial draft calendar published to clubs last month. We are now posting this provisional calendar on the Association website. Further updates will be applied by us as soon as we receive them from you . Clubs (and their members) should note in particular that West Highland Yachting Week has been brought forward to avoid a clash with the start of the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. This is very much a one-off change, and any consequent clashes (which seem at first sight to be minimal) are an unfortunate by-product of a busy summer in Scotland.

The calendar also includes a flotilla/muster plan being co-ordinated by RYA Scotland to coincide with the opening of the Commonwealth Games, starting at Greenock and proceeding up the Clyde. Further details will be promulgated by RYA Scotland in due course.

#### CYCA Delegates Meeting

Clubs are reminded once again that we are now on a cycle of ANNUAL Delegates Meetings, with the next one due in March 2014.

Successful continuation of the Association's business requires a small committee prepared to participate in a few meetings and to do a little bit of work on the different remits which the Association pursues.

We really need a few additional Executive Committee members. Clubs are requested to sound out their memberships such that we can work towards some additional nominations ahead of the March meeting.

Donald McLaren

Hon Secretary and Treasurer