

Personal accounts from individuals on one 'side' which purport to demonstrate widespread incompetence amongst individuals on the other are plentiful, but of very limited value: in most cases they serve only to demonstrate that in incidents at sea – as in accidents on land – those most directly involved almost always want to believe that it was someone else's fault.

It has also been suggested that commercial shipping should have priority at all times because it is earning money, but this begs the question: 'Money for whom? The operators, shareholders, and port authorities?' It should not be forgotten that although yachting is a leisure activity for most of its participants, it may well provide more employment than our declining shipping industry, and that, as well as generating revenue for port and marina operators, yachtsmen spend more in the towns they visit than do the crews of commercial ships.

So let's have less of the argument that the yachtsman is a second-class citizen at sea. Most are highly responsible in their chosen activity, just as professional seamen are, so if there has to be an 'us and them' situation, it should be between those who know and respect the rules, and those who don't.

Before we end up with the sea equivalent of 'road rage', let us find a balanced view that leaves room for all who live with, work on and enjoy the sea.

REFERENCES

- ¹ Bartlett, T. (1995). 'Conflicts in inshore waters' – a yachtsman's view. *This Journal*, 48, 154.
- ² Pike, D. (1995). 'Conflicts in inshore waters'. *This Journal*, 48, 153.
- ³ Booth, P. S. (1994). Conflicts in inshore waters. *This Journal*, 47, 208.

KEY WORDS

1. Port and harbour operations.
2. Small boat navigation.
3. Safety.
4. Collision avoidance.

Editor's Note

This topic has had a good airing since Commander Booth's original paper in May 1994. A number of contributions have since been published, some of them controversial. The plea for tolerance and mutual understanding contained in the article by Bartlett and Pike seems a good note on which to end. For the time being, discussion of the topic in the pages of the *Journal* is closed.