Editor's Report for 2022

My predecessor Joan Abrams was never content if there was a dearth of articles about boats, whether they were one-offs or particular classes, so she would have been happy with the count for 2022: nine in the spring issue, three in summer, two in autumn and three in the winter. Naturally, you can't expect a consistent figure over a year's journals, as summer and autumn turn our attention to sailing our boats, not building, promoting or dreaming about them.

A big change in content came from the escalating number of DCA sailing areas in the UK and overseas, each with its own secretary and its niche in the journal. This meant that rally reports snowballed, and the Contents had to earmark their positions over a wide range of pages. I am enthusiastic about this: if a dinghy cruising magazine doesn't feature its members' accounts of sailing in company, a major reason for its existence disappears.

The mixing in of serious articles and reviews with the usual rally reports has not caused the whole project to suffer over the year. The simple reason is that I can now expand the size of the publication inside very tolerant limits. The total page numbers of last year's issues were 112, 112, 100 and 112, respectively. Plenty of room for serious lengthy stuff, then. This is due to the printing technology evident in the last dozen journals: the pages are glued book-style into an encompassing front and back cover that forms a single unit. The increasing quality of the adhesive over the years has revolutionised this method. (Remember buying James Wharram's Two Girls, Two Catamarans and having the pages all fall out and turn into a book kit a few days later? Thankfully my recent purchase of a replacement is up to modern standards....)

Our previous printer did not have the expensive machinery needed for this method, so all their output was 'saddle-stitched', as they call it in the trade – stapled together. If you fold sheets of paper and insert them inside other folded sheets you find that the resulting booklet creeps outwards away from the spine. This outward creep was sheared off our journals by machine after the pages had been fixed together, but obviously there is only so far you can go with this method, which is why we were tied to 80 pages or less back then.

Changing to our new printer has been a major success. The journal looks more professional and the colours appear more vibrant than ever. They never miss deadlines and they use the same postal company we had previously, so the change was painless. However, not everything in the garden has been rosy. Two issues threw up problems we had never encountered before. Some copies of DC255 were without pages 67 to 82, and pages 51 to 66 were duplicated. I appealed for other members to report back if they too had experienced this, but only one came forward.

As the problem was later explained to be the fault of a member of the printing team, who had deposited a large tranche of pages on the wrong sorting table, I knew that the fault must have appeared in more than two journals! A friend of ours in the association said much later that he had found the same flaw, but didn't want to report it at the time as I had 'too much to do' already. I really do appreciate that thought, but obviously if I am going to make a serious complaint about these matters, it helps to know exactly how far the problem reaches. If you find anything wrong, please tell me!

Joshua Msika reported another kind of fault – his journal fell apart in two sections that showed a partially dry joint between the pages and the covers. (So who am I to be quoting bad workmanship evident in early Wharram books, I hear you say.) If you've had this happen to you, please report it now. We've never met our printers face to face, but we intend to find them in Llandudno in a week or so's time, so a range of topics could be covered – not omitting our basic admiration for the job they have done on the past 12 issues.

That leaves me with the 2022 Naylor Noggin, for 'Best Log of the Year'.

In DC253, Spring, there was John Miller's A Playground for Wayfarers, and Sam Griffiths' submission, Almost Around Anglesey in a Shetland Skiff. (Chris Cunningham's A Gokstad Faering on the Inside Passage would have won hands down had he not done it decades ago – and if he had been a DCA member...)

In DC254, Summer, Chris Forrest as Albatross of the WaterTribe tackled the Everglades Challenge in his Hobie Tandem Island; Charlie Hitchen (Turned Out Nice Again!) took on the Sound of Jura in a Swift 18; and John Hughes spent three days cruising from his Wirral mooring down the Welsh coast to Conway and back on Starcatcher, his Hitia catamaran. Then there was Andy Johnstone and his crew, Up the East Coast of Scotland in a Wayfarer without an Engine.

In DC255 Autumn, page 19 onwards, Alan Moulton recorded his Solent Summer Cruise.

DC256 offered some good sailing reports, which were challenging or exciting in different ways, but none really qualified for the 'Auld Mug'.

Watch this space.

Keith Muscott, Editor