

## Coastal Notes

The fine weather at the start of June brought the usual flock of visiting yachts into Stonehaven harbour. There have been several from Holland and Germany as well as from various parts of Scotland and England. The continental visitors love Stonehaven: once they find it they keep coming back. It offers deep enough water that they are always afloat, there are good facilities like showers and power available to them and they often use the harbour as a base from which to explore the surrounding area from Dunnottar Castle right up to Royal Deeside. Many of the cruising yachts have been visiting the area for years. The unseasonable weather at the end of the month drastically cut the numbers, but no doubt another fine spell will improve matters.

As well as the yachts, the fine weather brings out other water sports enthusiasts. The harbour area has become used to the sound of jet skis buzzing around in the bay and to seeing the surfers and canoeists testing the waves at the beach. Jet skis and surfers do not make for a safe mix, so a voluntary code of conduct has been drawn up to maintain safety for both groups. The jet skiers have agreed to keep south of an area marked by the harbour boundary up to the fourth lamppost down from the Carron Bridge, leaving the rest of the bay for other recreational users. The MCA has also issued a Code of Practice for personal watercraft users; this leaflet, titled 'Safety Guidelines for Personal Watercraft Users', is available from the harbour master's office.

Although not as immediately obvious these days, Stonehaven still is a working fishing harbour as well. There are 6 boats earning a living from the sea, 5 creel boats and one trawler. The creel boats are after crabs and lobster, while the 'Harvester' has just changed from fishing for scallops to prawns. Most of their catches are sold away from the area but a percentage is bought locally and can be found on the menus of local hotels or in the fish shops.

On a recent MRI training exercise from Findon Ness in the north and Gourdon to the south, the level of recreational activity along the shoreline was plain to see. Climbers were on the rock face to the north of Newtonhill, rock fishers were casting a lure at Findon, Newtonhill, Downie Point and Crawton Ness and the usual recreational craft were abundant from Newtonhill to Catterline. Numerous people followed the cliff paths from the War Memorial to Dunnottar Castle and at the Fowl's Heugh bird sanctuary. It was good to see so many people enjoying our coastal environment, which when treated with respect provides a rich source of enjoyment and outdoor activity.

For further information, or to find out how you can support the work of Maritime Rescue Institute, please contact 01569 765768.