From the 2014 AGM I took away the message that the Association must look at the issue of the high age profile of our membership and the need to focus on the job of recruiting new members. The project group formed in January have made their contributions and we have now moved on to create a dedicated Promotions Team who will manage a much more active marketing programme using all the media available to us from yachting magazines to social media. The aim is to raise the profile of the sport targeting 30 to 50 year olds as potential members. We have agreed a pragmatic plan to promote our sport to our target audience

As part of our work we commissioned the member survey and received almost 500 responses. Whist, in hindsight, the survey could have been improved it has given us some good information that we may not have recognized before. This was sent by email to the 1000 or so members for whom we have email addresses (we will look for more next year) and was widely publicised via the website and via Districts. For some time the Association has stated that we are to communicate to clubs and members via digital media. The website and email communication is central to this policy

Our web development has necessarily been slower than we would have liked but we are getting there. We are extracting the important parts of the ‘old’ Knowledge Base to be easily available via the main MYA site. Take a look at what is there already, in particular the Club and Skipper Development section and Race Management. You will find plenty of hints and tips and advice with more to come. The management of the member database is our current challenge being worked on

Our Race Team has finalised the Calendar for 2016, and are looking at various issues to further improve the events as we go into the New Year. Bill Green’s report shows what level of effort and work is going into organising the race programme

Our Class Captains have been active this year and this remains a focal point for action. We see the job of the Promotions Team to develop the sport in general with the development of classes being the responsibility of the Class Captains. We have seen some spectacular results for some of the classes in improved numbers at key events and indeed an increased number of events available for members.

I would also mention that we have created a Vane racing Team (VRT) chaired by Anthony Warren the CC. This development came about recognizing that the Association has had a ‘hands off’ approach to this part of the sport, and did little to support this aspect of racing. The VRT have also issued a member survey that showed that whilst they are a minority group, the vane racers are active and growing. The VRT should provide structure and support for this group

This next edition of Acquaint will be the last edited by Charles Smith. It is absolutely appropriate for me to thank Charles for the brilliant job that he has done in continuing to improve the magazine with every edition published. It is also a good time to say thanks to the other half of the team, Damian Ackroyd who takes Charles’s work and turns it into the magazine we all know. As we approach the AGM we have a vacancy for Editor going forward. We do really need this position to be filled if we are to continue with the high standards that Charles has provided. Council are looking at alternatives should we be unsuccessful in finding a new Editor
I have posted a Progress Report for this year which actually lays out some objectives and priorities for the next two or three years. These have come from the member survey and are based on some of the statistics but in the main are from consistent and repeated member feedback in the comments received. Almost 500 responses from around 1000 surveys issued is at the top end of good for response rates. Whilst some may question how representative the respondents were of ‘the average member’ my analysis indicates that it does indeed give a reasonable picture of membership views.

A final point is to mention our International travellers. GBR have had a stellar year with great success at all the World and European events even including a National Champion in Brazil!

Assuming I am voted in at the AGM as Chairman this will be my last year in the job. Four years is long enough, it will be time to have a new Chairman to bring fresh thoughts to the job for the well being of the Association. In my final year I do however want to instigate a strategic review of the workings and structure of the Association and Council to ensure we are fit for purpose and that we can provide a sustainable and good level of support for the sport. Still plenty to do

I look forward to the New Year and completing some of the work in progress

Keith Coxon
Chairman MYA

November 2015