Conference roundup

The usual round of conferences took place over the winter, giving shorebased and practical instructors the chance to catch up with developments in RYA training. The turnout was great and it was encouraging to see so many instructors taking such an active part in the RYA programmes.

So, how's it going?

The cruising scheme has been levelling off in its growth over the last year. As a whole, the number of certificates issued was broadly the same as the past two years.

The sales of shorebased course packs from the RYA were about 4% down last year mainly due to night schools being affected by the lack of funding from the Learning Skills Council. Night school courses vary in cost from £120 to £320. We are expecting a fall in enrolments again this year.

Overall, it was felt that, although the figures are down around the country, it hasn't put off those who really want to take a course and it is likely that the commercial centres are benefiting as night schools start to match commercial prices.

The number of certificates of competence issued has remained static, with about 60-70% being commercially endorsed. *See figure 1*

Sales of non-tidal motor cruising certificates dipped last year, maybe due to the increase in ICC courses being run in the Mediterranean. The RYA recommends that centres run Day Skipper courses instead of the ICC as this introduces people to RYA training courses. *See figure 2*

The sail cruising scheme is healthy with the introduction of the Start Yachting course. The good news is that this course hasn't impacted on Competent Crew courses which are, in fact, on the up. Hopefully, this will result in more people doing Day Skipper courses this year. *See figure 3*

Coastal Skipper courses have a very low take up. It would be good to see fast track courses concentrating on giving skills to get crews to complete their passages without the instructor and after a Coastal Skipper course.

The Yachtmaster® Ocean shorebased course will be reviewed over the next few years. It is felt that more instructor and student support is required along with improved literature. Any major changes to the Ocean course will have to gain approval from the MCA and Yachtmaster® Qualification Panel. *See figure 4*

Figure 1. Certificates of competence

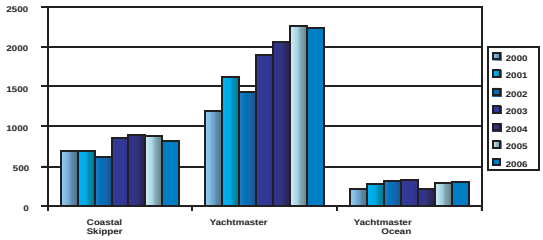


Figure 2. Motor cruising certificates

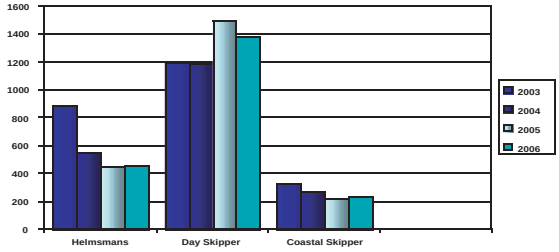


Figure 3. Sail cruising certificates

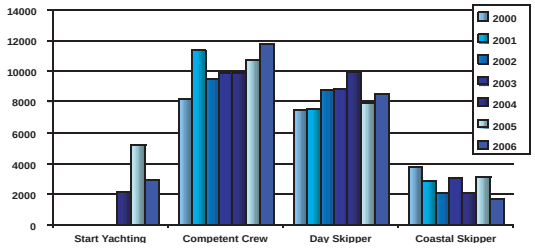
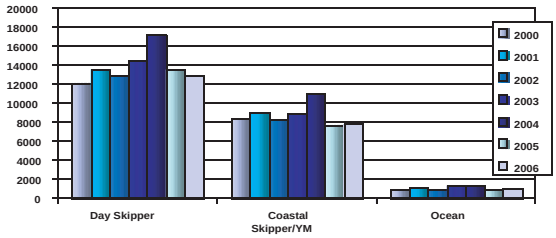


Figure 4. Shorebased certificates



Training centre guidance notes

The Recognition Guidance Notes (RGN1) have been revised. Please read them! There is also a new training vessel checklist which is two pages instead of the previous four, which applies to all vessels in the cruising schemes. The intention is that the same standards apply to all vessels, whether in the UK or overseas. The checklist should be filled out before the inspector arrives.

Food hygiene

Food hygiene regulations have changed and practical centres are advised to look at the RYA website to see how these changes affect them. You will find a series of documents including information about the risks involved and '10 top tips' for avoiding problems. For further details see **www.rya.org.uk/WorkingWithUs/trainingcentres/Foodhygiene**

Motor cruising experience days

These experience days for instructors have been very successful in introducing aspects of motor cruiser handling and manoeuvring and subjects such as GPS. They have helped our shorebased and sailing instructors to gain a better understanding of motor cruising. We are looking into running catamaran experience days in the future.

Sea survival conference

A sea survival conference will be held at the RNLI in Poole on October 13, 2007. It will be an opportunity for sea survival instructors to be updated with new standards for safety equipment.

Logbook and handbook updates

The G27 instructors handbook and the G15 and G18 logbooks will be revised during the summer of 2007.

RYA coaching awards

The Yachtmaster® Instructor and Shorebased Instructor of the Year awards were announced at the RYA Raymarine Conference in January. This year's winners were Julie Proudfoot and Dave Murray from Liverpool.

Discussion workshops

The two discussion topics that were generic to both shorebased and practical conferences were:

- Should there be a tidal conversion course for holders of non-tidal course completion certificates? *Delegates felt there should be a conversion course lasting about two days.*
- Are changes required to the syllabi following the MAIB report on the delivery skipper who was lost overboard? *Delegates decided that no changes are required following the MAIB report.*

Shorebased papers 2006/7

General consensus is that students and shorebased instructors like the new charts. Any amendments to the almanac and papers are available on the website in the instructor resources section of 'Working with us'.

There is an intention to update the training slides by putting illustrations from RYA publications on the web for all to use. However, this will take time to negotiate and organise.

New Basic Navigation Course

This new course will be available from September 2007 and can be run over two days (16 hours). See front page for further details.

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