



MANCHESTER CRUISING ASSOCIATION

Cruising – the RYA Agenda

**Stuart Carruthers & Carol Paddison: 12
October 2006**

The RYA has a general role in protecting boating in the UK. It is recognised by Government as our representative on national and international committees and is, of course, the fount of training and certification for almost everything involved with floating at leisure. And surely much more. However, it was very specifically concerns about what the RYA is doing for the cruising yachtsman that had prompted the invitation ,so we quickly narrowed down to that and Stuart broke this down into four areas: Advice to Members, Events, Campaigns and Regulations

ADVICE TO MEMBERS

They are asked a wide range of questions and they gave us a few examples, with some answers:

COLREGS Where there is an active interest in how to behave when you meet a racing fleet.

SOLAS V is largely commonsense. The reaction to the passage planning requirement was a little overblown at the beginning. It's now clear that often a mental plan is all that is needed. Imagine someone knocking on the side of your boat as you are leaving and asking you to tell them your passage plan. That's usually enough. The application of the Merchant Shipping Regulations for larger boats leads to several additional requirements. Safety generally equipping your boat no real statutory requirements for smaller leisure craft hence Boat Safety Handbook C8
CG99 Safety Identification Scheme

Electronic aids They are often asked about the use of electronic aids to navigation and the response is basically commonsense. Whatever it is, learn to use it properly and then use it with caution and awareness of its limitations. He mentioned the problem of NAVTEX dead-spots but usually difficulties are down to poor installation.

Ship and personal papers

Carol reminded us that

- Registration is required if you plan to go offshore or overseas.
- Check everything is on your VHF licence – when it becomes free there will be no-one triggering you to checkt
- Insurance must cover the whole area you anticipate sailing in
- You must have proof that VAT has been paid

- You must carry your ICC – it's the best thing available to show competence
- Crew lists are required in Belgium and NL under the Schengen Agreement

Rights of passage

UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) Article 17 gives you a right of innocent passage through territorial waters. It has to be “continuous and expeditious” although you might be permitted to anchor to wait for the tide. And for it to be “innocent passage” don't do anything other than sail on, polluting nothing and stopping only to rescue someone. Once you are in port or near the coast this doesn't apply and then you are relying on the *comity of nations*: “Courtesy between nations that obligates their mutual recognition of each other's laws”. It means you can abide by own state's regulations rather than those of where you are – but, remember, this is merely a courtesy

Holding tanks are necessary in the Baltic (with slightly different requirements by individual states) and in parts of the Mediterranean.

Buying and selling a boat is sometimes tricky and they do advise members on this

Flag etiquette. Stuart revealed (it was “sheepishly admitted” really) that he is the RYA expert on flag etiquette. He did tell us one useful thing that made the Treasurer sit up. The Royal Yacht Squadron fines its members £200 for flag etiquette violations. Terry clearly thought that this could be another useful source of income. (Later he did concede that it would be difficult to enforce – but I'm not so sure)

EVENTS

The Cruise in Company is a popular event but, since it is on the South Coast it's not much use to us up here. Members could be heard sharpening their black puddings at this point.

CAMPAIGNS

Stuart gave us a rundown on recent campaigns:

- Accidents and incidents – where the many systems need drawing together
- Light dues – who pays?
- Opposing AIS being made compulsory
- Retaining the derogation on diesel
- Design of offshore wind farms
- NAVTEX and VHF forecasts – improved forecasts next year
- Unmarked fishing gear – he encouraged us to report examples the RYA or through CHIRPs
- Time-expired pyrotechnic disposal remains a major problem

- Boozing and boats and the Railway and Transport Safety Act 2003 (RATS Part4) – revolves around when a professional seaman is “on duty”. My reading is that, for the leisure yachtsman, the later sections of the Act may be more relevant . These specify breathalyser-type limits for someone “exercising, or purporting or attempting to exercise, a function in connection with the navigation of the ship” while it’s under way. I’m a purporter myself so I’m off the porter.

REGULATIONS

The RYA are advising on or scrutinising a number of regulatory initiatives:

- UK Marine Bill
- EU maritime policy
- Water Framework Directive
- Recreational Craft Directive
- MARPOL Annex 4 marine pollution
- HELCOM Convention on sewage in the Baltic

There were a few technical questions and it was left to one member to pose the question that had led to the invitation in the first place: was the RYA now a publishing and training company rather than an organisation representing its members? We don’t beat about the bush in the Manchester area. In fact, even if there were bushes, we wouldn’t know how to start beating them.

Stuart’s response was impassioned, well-argued and comprehensive. He pointed back to all they are doing for members and added that, without RYA publications, there would be enormous gaps leaving folk confused about any number of things. We might even slip into more Regulation. Personally, I’m happy there’s someone fighting against unmarked fishing gear, for practicable flare disposal and for better weather forecasts. And I certainly don’t want to get involved in the Water Framework Directive or, God forbid, the HELCOM Convention on sewage in the Baltic. I’d pay to keep out of that and, come to think of it, I do.