

## **RYA e-canal Ltd IW Training Conference 2013**



Despite the late spring snowy weather, there was a good turnout for the Inland Waterways conference, with many RTCs represented by a mix of principals and instructors. There was a great buzz about the day with many people taking the opportunity to catch up with old friends and networking with new ones. Over a packed programme of workshops, presentations and updates, our biggest enemy was time. We won't leave it so long until the next one!

The day was kicked off by Rachel Andrews who explained the format of the day. Mike Kelly from e-canal Ltd gave a whistle-stop tour of their Water-Way and e-canalmap products. This was most informative and led to a busy day for Mike and business partner Roy Prescott demonstrating and answering questions.

Richard Falk, RYA Training Manager gave an overview of the RYA and how it works for the membership and the boating public. The keynote speech was delivered by Simon Salem, Marketing and Fundraising Director for the Canal and River Trust. This talk focussed on the transition from British Waterways to the Canal and River Trust and their work recruiting and motivating a new army of volunteers.

The day continued with informative presentations, discussions and an update of the scheme.

### **Presentation Workshops**

#### **Effective Briefing and Reviewing Skills**

This workshop looked at learning styles and briefing and reviewing techniques for instructors

#### **Marketing your Training Centre**

Hints and tips on how to promote your training centre, including understanding who your customer is, what they want from you and how to communicate with them

#### **Keeping your head above the water**

The latest hot tips on sustainable boating and the environmental rules of the road

## Disability Awareness

An introduction to the new Sailability disability awareness training and some helpful tips on working with the disabled in a club or commercial environment

## Discussion Workshops

**IWHC Pass or Action Plan?** Delegates discussed how we can be sure students reach the correct standard. There was a prompt sheet to consider the levels of knowledge of/ understands/ can do in relation to the syllabus which will appear in the next reprint of the Inland Waterways Handbook.

The group agreed that having the depth of knowledge for each syllabus item detailed would help instructors to know to what level to deliver and help to maintain consistency of the course across all training centres.

Some delegates thought it would be better if the course was 2-days in duration for those with little experience.

If an instructor felt their candidate had not achieved the level required, there should be a written (or emailed) follow-up for the candidate so that they know what they need to work on. *However, it should be noted that covering the course over 2 days gives ample time for 99% of candidates to achieve the level required [RYA Training].*

There was mention of the course being an “attendance course” and therefore everyone should receive a certificate. *This is not the case. As with all RYA courses, there is a level to be achieved before a certificate is awarded. The new plastic certificate confirms it is awarded on successful completion of the course [RYA Training].*

## Marketing your Training Centre

Following on from the workshop, this was a chance to network with other Centre Principals and instructors to share ideas. Here is the summary of the group’s views:

- Things currently working well:
  - RYA website – where’s my nearest
  - If you do IWHC cert discount on hire
  - Group booking discount – bring a friend
  - Contact local papers
  - 2 day course has better image – 3 out of 4 of us sold more 2 day courses than 1 day courses
- Issues within centres
  - Having dates of courses set in advance
  - Priority to hire boats
  - Flexibility with other commitments
  - Volunteer availability
- Inland Waterways image, both within the RYA & Public perception
  - Rebrand with RYA to give a sexy image
  - Attract younger boaters
  - Raising profile to be at same (ish) level as dinghy & powerboat
- What we are going to start doing
  - Contact local sailing clubs and offer discounts or try a day
  - Set Training dates in advance
  - Contact local businesses & colleges

## Principal’s course and on-going support

Support for centres and Principals: Starting a new RTC can be daunting as there is a lot to understand. How can the RYA better support those involved in setting up and managing an RYA centre?

This was an opportunity to discuss ideas and topics for a future RYA Training Centre Principal course and to have a say as to the kind of support that would be useful for new and existing Centre Principals. Here is a summary of the discussion:

- It was felt by the group that a stand-alone Principals course is not the answer. There were concerns about:
  - Who would pay
  - Would it be relevant to do
  - Would it be relevant to their location
- The group felt a better option would be
  - to assign a 'buddy' or mentor Principal from another RTC.
  - Be able to visit the buddy at the RTC
  - Receive a subjective, honest report from the buddy. Rather than a yes/no tick box inspection
  - Advise should be relevant to IW & size of operation

### **Demand for higher level course**

Is there a demand for a higher level course than the Inland Waterways Helmsman and if so what should be included?

Some felt that with the advent of an Inland Waterways Crew Course a higher course would not be necessary. Others wanted a course that is focussed on safety of passengers, precautions of operating at night, and were more in tune with operating a 12 person passenger boat.

### **What resources can the RYA provide for instructors?**

Is there a need, what would be useful to support instructors? How should this be communicated?

This discussion group did not run, but one delegate put their thoughts down on paper which included hands-on material (model etc) of relevant material. E.g. simple lock chamber, outline narrowboat and a suggestion of spiral bound handbooks for instruction purposes

### **Inland Waterways Helmsman course length**

Should this be a 2-day course with the option of a one-day direct assessment for those with prior experience?

Background information for this discussion:

The RYA Powerboat Level 2 certificate is achievable through two routes, depending on the candidate's prior experience. For those with little or no prior experience, a two day course is the best route. This gives adequate time for virtually all participants on a full course to achieve the target level and be awarded the certificate. There is plenty of time to cover all aspects of the syllabus to the desired level. The second route is for those with prior boating experience to undertake a direct assessment. The second option is purely an assessment with no teaching. This option should only be considered by those with lots of experience who are proficient boat-handlers. The pass rate for the direct assessment is lower than for the two-day course.

With the increase in those requiring a certificate as proof of competence, is it now time to consider a direct assessment?

The group was split as follows:

- Choose for themselves if the customers require 2 days or 1
- IWHC 1 or 2 day should remain to give flexibility
- Different endorsement for different types of waterway – river, canal, loch
- 2 or 3 hour direct assessment
- No need for 1 day assessment as same as IWHC length
- Not required
- Some concern about the fact that they could pass students who can then go onto commercial endorsement. Should be 2 day for anyone who wants commercial.

#### **Note from RYA Training**

*There seems to have been a misunderstanding as to the use of IWHC as an alternative qualification under the boat master scheme for commercially operated vessels in category A and B waters. The MCA selects which qualifications can be used as an alternative to the Boatmaster License, and has decided to accept a number of RYA qualifications. The RYA campaigned successfully on behalf of IWHC holders that a commercial endorsement would not be necessary for use in A and B waters. At the time, those seeking a commercial endorsement for RYA certificates were required to hold a Sea Survival certificates and the MCA accepted that this was not relevant to the Inland Waterways.*

It is important to note that when a certificate is selected for use as an alternate standard this is the MCA's recognition of the RYA's quality and standard of training and delivery of an individual certificate. Instructors must teach and assess to the level described in the syllabus, whether the candidate intends to take the course for pleasure purposes or with a view to using it professionally in the future.

#### **Inland Waterways Scheme Update**

Rachel Andrews gave an RYA Training and Inland Waterways scheme update during which the new Inland Waterways Crew course was introduced. This is a course aimed at both youngsters and other crew on board. It is envisaged that the crew course will run alongside the Inland Waterways Helmsman's course. There was an appeal to centres to pilot the course with a dedicated web page for information on how to sign up:

<http://www.rya.org.uk/coursestraining/resources/Pages/NewIWcrewcourse.aspx>

RYA Training would like to extend special thanks to e-canal Ltd for supporting our conference, without their support the conference would have been very different. Also thank you to the exhibitors showing their dedication and all the delegates for travelling to be with us!!

A word from our sponsors... "e-canal was very pleased to be able to sponsor the RYA Training day. The excellent organisation and friendly RYA staff helped make this a very successful event judging from the positive reaction from the delegates. The benefits for e-canal were numerous and allowed us to showcase our electronic waterway guides and apps to a receptive and appreciative audience. All-in-all it was well worth the cost and effort!" Mike Kelly