

Advanced Dinghy Cruiser Training Course

Updated July 2021

Duration: Three Days, specifically to include one day-cruise (weather permitting)
To be run on Tidal Water

Please be aware that this is NOT an RYA Course

Tides (2021), at LSC: Friday 24 – Sunday 26 September

0453 Eastham

53°19'N, 2°57'W 24/09/2021 09:23 1.4 m Zone System

Predictions for this port are of secondary quality

Graph HWLW Heights Clearance Moon

24/09/2021			25/09/2021			26/09/2021		
	Time	Height		Time	Height		Time	Height
High	01:59	9.7 m	High	02:30	9.4 m	High	03:01	9.0 m
	14:18	9.3 m		14:48	9.1 m		15:18	8.7 m
Low	08:38	1.1 m	Low	09:04	1.4 m	Low	09:29	1.7 m
	20:49	1.3 m		21:16	1.6 m		21:44	2.1 m

NB. Seriously old software (TotalTide), with no updates available, so regard these predictions as only a good approximation.

A more recent app on my phone (Absolute Tides) predicts about 15 minutes earlier, and 0.1 or 0.2 m lower.

Note that predictions are only predictions; actual heights and times may differ!

Friday: Arrival, step masts & rig boats;
 discussion around boats of useful cruising features.
 Tweak reefing arrangements as necessary.
 Shore sessions

Early Lunch

Afloat sessions c. 1200 - 1600

Saturday: Shore sessions

Lunch

Afloat sessions c. 1230 – 1700

Sunday: Shore sessions

Lunch

Upriver cruise; either Big Triangle or Run The Bridge
ETA return to slipway 1700; derig, debrief, and course ends c. 1830

This course, developed following a specific request from a GP14 Class Association member, is designed to give dinghy sailors who are already basically competent the specific additional skills needed for independent cruising. In doing so, this will of course equip them for cruising in organised groups, where the skill set is in some respects rather less demanding.

Thus far the course has been run just once, at an inland water venue (by special request), and a second (tidal) iteration of the course is now planned on the intensely tidal waters of the River Mersey. Once that second iteration has been completed it is intended to offer the course to RYA to sit alongside their existing two Advanced dinghy courses catering for cruisers, and we feel that it complements the two existing RYA courses very appropriately (see below).

The emphasis will be on day-cruising, rather than camping aboard, both because of limitations of time and because the details of the latter is often very boat-specific.

It is intended that the training will be tailored so far as possible to the particular experience level and skills and needs of the individual participants. However it is also realised that it is fairly unlikely that there will be enough time to cover everything here in a single weekend, so tailoring the course to the individual trainees will be vital.

The following outline is therefore provisional, and is intended to give a preliminary guide to the level of the course prior to individuals booking.

However the course is specifically intended as **advanced** cruiser training, so we do expect all participants to be competent at basic boat handling. RYA Level 2 plus at least a little further experience is probably a good guide.

Particular emphasis will be given to reefing, as probably the single most important item. This will be not merely a “once through the drill” quick exercise, but (provided trainees’ boats are suitably equipped) it will give trainees sufficient practice to enable them to become able to pull down the necessary reefs quickly, efficiently and effectively, and above all safely and reliably, while actually at sea, including in near-gale conditions; because it is in precisely those conditions that the skill is most vital. It will also cover setting up the system so that the reefed sail sets properly flat, and is as efficient as possible. Where trainees’ boats are not suitably equipped we will do the best we can using the demonstrator boat, but that may have to be done by practice drills ashore.

As part of the pre-course material participants will be supplied with an article on reefing systems for the GP14 dinghy, and also one on anchors (and both are broadly applicable to most dinghies). If those bringing their own boats can have them already fitted for reefing, and also equipped with a suitable anchor and associated gear, that would enable them to get the best out of the course; don’t worry if some tweaking of the adjustments is needed, since that readily can be done as part of the course.

Although the course is being developed independently of the RYA, it appears from their website that there is some degree of overlap between this course and two of their “Improvers and Advanced Courses”, namely Dinghy Seamanship Skills and Dinghy Day Sailing. The present course covers rather more ground in total, but with the same duration for each of the three courses it seems likely that these RYA courses - which each cover more limited ground - do so in more depth; thus the three courses are probably complementary to each other.

However even within the areas of overlap, I would expect that this course will cover some items which are not in the RYA course (e.g. several details of optimising the reefing system, and some aspects of MOB recovery), while there will surely be other items where the balance is the other way round.

Shore session/s

- Road transit - towing arrangements
- Stepping and unstepping mast
- Cruising sails
- Reefing systems - kit, technique
 - Genoa roller reefing - options for kit;
 - Helyar (richard@hartleyboats.com),
 - Bartels (<https://reefing.systems>),
 - Aero Luffspars (<http://www.aeroluffspars.co.uk>),
 - Edge Sails luff battenn system (<http://www.edgesails.com>)
 - Holt Mini-reef (secondhand - now discontinued by manufacturer)
 - Mainsail slab reefing - kit, and setting it up
 - Techniques (with and without topping lift)
 - Quick-release kicker (snap shackle)
 - Topping lift
 - Sail ties
- Masthead buoyancy
 - Halliard arrangement
- Alternative propulsion
 - Oars and crutches (a.k.a. rowlocks); paddle/s for the short burst (only)
 - Outboard motor
- Communications / distress signals
 - Handheld VHF
 - PLBs
 - Flares - pyrotechnic or electronic
 - RYA Safe TRX or shore contact plus all the others above.
 - Waterproof packs for mobile phones
- Anchoring - kit, arrangements, techniques
 - Choice of anchor and rode
 - Importance of anchor fairlead near stem / jury rig of alternative
 - Length of rode required - related to depth of water
 - Mooring to two anchors
 - Remote "Anchor Off" with trip line
 - Remote "Anchor Off" with second line ashore - only in non-tidal waters
- MOB Recovery
 - Returning to the casualty
 - Keep casualty in sight
 - RYA figure-of-eight method OR
 - OLS bear off-gybe-circle method
 - Getting casualty back aboard
 - Including use of boarding ladder
 - Potential need for CPR
 - Refer to RYA First Aid course
 - Potential need for Mayday call
- Lee shores
 - Dangers
 - Coming in
 - Getting off
- Sailing under genoa alone
 - Use of reefing line to control speed of approach to beach, jetty, etc.
 - Particularly useful technique at LSC!

} If required

} Alternatives, but one or the other is essential for efficient reefing at sea

Items in red are specially important, for safety.

There is some uncertainty whether this is included in RYA Level 2; so I now recognise that this may not necessarily be prior knowledge!

- Transom sheeting (centre sheeting for racing, transom sheeting for cruising)
 - More room in boat, esp. for crew to cross boat in tacks and gybes
 - Gybing technique with transom sheeting
- Tiller brakes and other restraints
 - Particularly useful for single-handing
 - Lanyards
 - Shock cord
 - Huntingford Helm Impeder
- Tide prediction
 - Depth for anchoring
 - Direction and rates of streams
 - Sources of information for direction and rates of streams
 - Software (PC/laptop/tablet/phone)
 - Atlas of tidal streams
 - Chart lozenges
 - Nautical almanacs
 - Pilot books
 - Ask local sailors
- Charts - “map reading” skills
 - Paper charts commercially available:
 - Admiralty, Imray
 - Full size, folded, folio
 - Carrying paper charts/extracts in a dinghy
 - Chart cases
 - Kelvin Hughes chart cases (discontinued??)
 - Other brands of chart cases
 - (but I have not seen any as good as the K-H ones!)
 - Laminated photocopies of extracts
 - Online charts
 - Visit My Harbour
 - Chartsets in portable chartplotters & laptops/tablets;
 - raster and vector charts
 - awareness of dangers of hidden data in vector charts; need for sufficient zoom to show the dangers
 - Chartplotter apps for phones, tablets, laptops
 - Navionics
 - Memory-Map
 - Visit My Harbour
- Keeping up the position
 - Log book ???
 - Mark on chart (case)?
 - Even approximate is better than nothing
 - **OR clear mental picture, at all times, of where you are**

- Passage planning
 - Weather - sources of information
 - Navigation warnings - sources of information
 - Tides - sources of information
 - Wind over tide effects
 - Tidal gates, and other local hazards
 - Pilot books, charts, etc.
 - Ask local sailors
 - Headlands, shoals, tide races, overfalls - where to expect them / avoiding them
 - Escape Routes
 - Pre-marking the chart in advance of passage
 - Information to carry onboard
 - Weather forecast
 - Notes of heights of tides, hour by hour
 - Directions of tidal stream, and when it turns
 - What else (depends on intended cruise)?
 - All on laminated sheet, or other waterproof medium
- Colregs (a.k.a. Rule Of The Road)
 - Most relevant rules
 - Most relevant lights and shapes
 - Lights for one's own GP14
 - - a reliable large torch is sufficient, but it must work !
- Mooring alongside quay, etc.,
 - Fenders
 - Correct lines
 - Problems with, and allowances for, falling tide
 - Securing lines so that they can be released under load
 - (e.g. NOT with a bowline at each end!!)
- Other kit to carry onboard - permanent:
 - Righting lines (demonstrate)
 - Tow rope / mooring ropes / long line (extension anchor warp)
 - Fenders?
 - Second anchor?
 - Tent peg / mooring spike ?
 - Tool kit (shackle key, knife, multitool)
 - Spares (shackles, string, whipping twine, sail repair tape)
 - Foghorn?
 - Boarding ladder?
 - Waterproof containers / drybags ?
- Other kit to carry onboard - brought aboard each time, for just the specific cruise:
 - Change of clothing (in drybag)?
 - Foul weather gear?
 - Waterproof containers / drybags ?
 - Camera/s (in drybag/s)?
 - Picnic gear??
 - Camping kit??
- Venues - attractive cruising waters
- Sleeping/camping aboard - if required
 - Refer to DCA and also Wayfarer Association

Afloat Sessions / Sailing

- Reefing exercises
- MOB recovery exercises
- Anchoring exercises
- Use of transits (including *ad hoc* ones) for crossing tidal flow
- Picking up moorings exercises
- Coming alongside exercises (jetty, pontoon, etc.)
 - (Not available at LSC; but moored yacht perhaps?)
- Sailing under main alone
- Sailing under genoa alone
 - Use of reefing line to control speed of approach to beach, jetty, etc.
 - Particularly useful technique at LSC! ...
- Heaving-to
- Lee shores? - circumstances either will or will not present themselves!
- Short day cruise/s to appropriate places (dependent on venue); **allow plenty of time for this - preferably full day**
- Practise as many of the above skills as possible
 - Reefing (on the whistle?), anchoring, picking up moorings.
 - MOB recovery
- Just possibly, steering a compass course.

Refer to RYA Improvers and Advanced Courses:

- Seamanship Skills (2 days)
 - Launching and recovering the boat in different circumstances,
 - Stopping,
 - Reducing sail,
 - Recovering a man overboard,
 - Anchoring
- Day Sailing (2 days)
 - Preparing and planning for a day cruise,
 - Pilotage
 - Decision making, including adverse conditions