

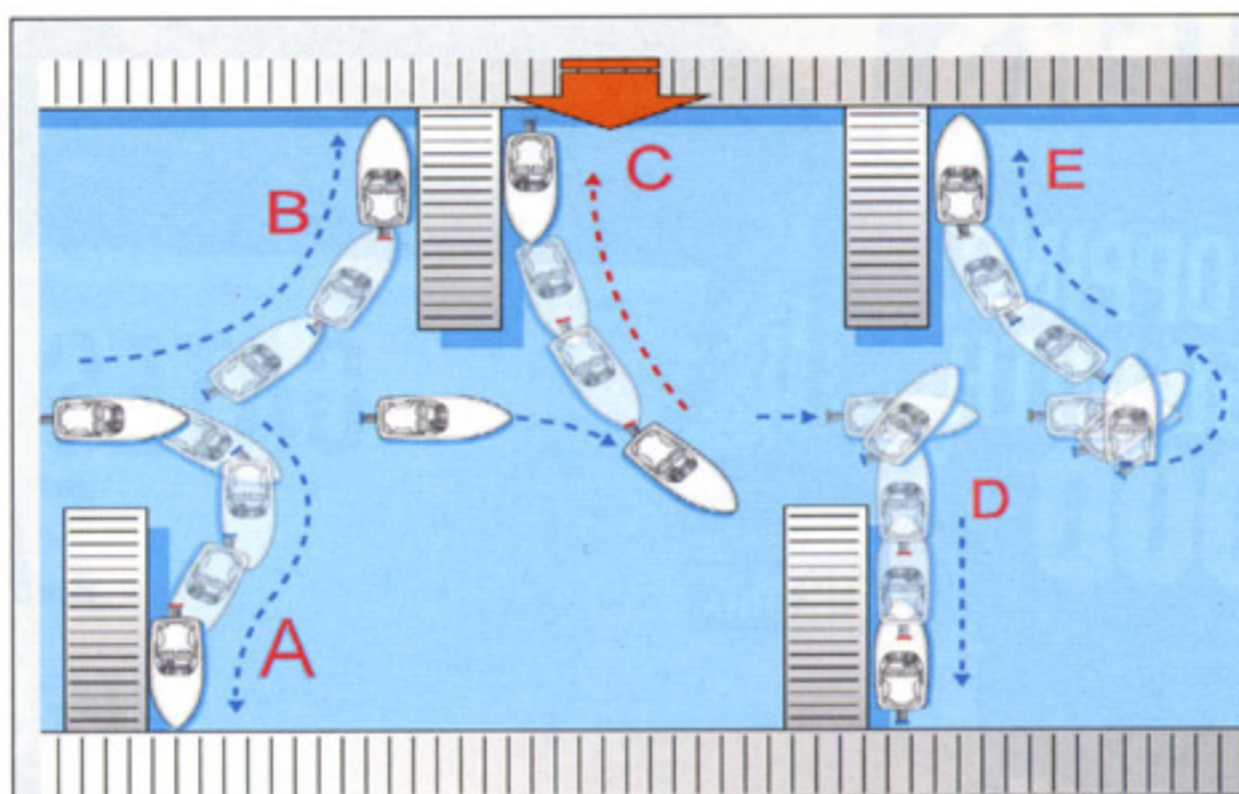


LET'S NOT BE TWO-FACED ABOUT IT...

Getting out to the beach, skiing, wakeboarding and blasting along the coast is what we all tend to go ribbing for ...

As we established in the last article, gaining the ability to handle your RIB at slow speed in close proximity to other craft and hard objects is the hardest part of developing your boating skills – which is precisely why the RYA Powerboat Level 2 focuses plenty of time and effort on it.

We saw last time that the simplest 'coming alongside' is to bring your RIB alongside a long, straight pontoon where you have plenty of space and the elements are acting as a brake against the RIB. The reality is often somewhat different, though, and we need to ensure that we have the skills and knowledge to deal with a variety of possible berthing situations.



A: For the craft trying to enter this berth, the face of the berth is 'closed' as they approach and the wind is pushing them into it. The turn is seamless but risks creating momentum away from the berth; wind directly on the stern needs to be factored in. Precise helming makes this approach possible but perhaps more difficult than the approach in **E** – again, a closed-face berth,

but this time the craft goes beyond the berth turn to create an 'open-face' berth. Momentum then helps to carry the vessel onto the berth as you approach. In **C** the craft is reversing into the berth and into the wind. Craft typically hold very well stern to wind, so this ends up being a fairly straightforward approach. Set up an angle of 20–30° into the berth and gently

ease in. Berth **D** has the potential to be quite tricky as the wind will try to push the bow off to port or starboard. The shorter the distance the boat has to reverse, the less time the wind has to push the bow around; coupling this to careful use of 'steer then gear' will help to keep the boat moving steadily into the berth. Also, when approaching the berth beware of being blown onto the boats on the downwind side, but it will help to effect your turn with the stern near the berth so as to reduce the distance that you need to travel. Like anything to do with boating, practice makes perfect, so spend time with your boat around a marina. Only when you have entered a berth 20–30 times do you really start to feel every aspect of the way that it is moving and start to be 'at one' with it.

So we've left the marina and have travelled to our destination where we plan to anchor. Depending on where you do your boating, anchoring may be a daily necessity or something you rarely ever do if there are mooring buoys and marinas to tie up in. Anchoring, though, is a key skill and opens up loads of opportunities for places to stop; it is also a key safety tool – if you have an engine issue, get to a safe point and drop the anchor. Even dropping it in water deeper than you can anchor can arrest drift. The process for anchoring is very similar to approaching a mooring buoy. Choose a suitable anchorage by checking a chart; ensure you have five–six times the depth there in terms of chain/rope (don't forget to factor in tidal changes); approach your chosen point into the combined effects of wind and tide (the same as for a mooring buoy); check the

line is ready and secured; deploy the anchor (don't drag it over the tubes) and pay out the line as the RIB drops back with the wind/tide. The anchor will bite and hopefully hold. Check to see if the anchor is dragging – there are a few ways to do this: i) Line up two objects out of the side of the RIB (a 'transit') to see if their position relative to each other changes; ii) Take a bearing to an object out of the side of the boat ('abeam'); iii) Use the 'anchor watch' feature on the GPS unit; iv) Is the line vibrating? If yes, it is possibly dragging.

Tip: Anchoring a RIB often means the anchor line runs over the tubes at the bow with the potential to cause chafing. A good idea is to secure the painter line (the line typically found running from the bow 'D-ring') using a double sheet bend to the anchor line so that you deploy the line and

the anchor line runs from the D-ring instead. The remainder of the anchor line comes into the boat and is secured as a backup. There is no load on this line, so no chafing will occur.

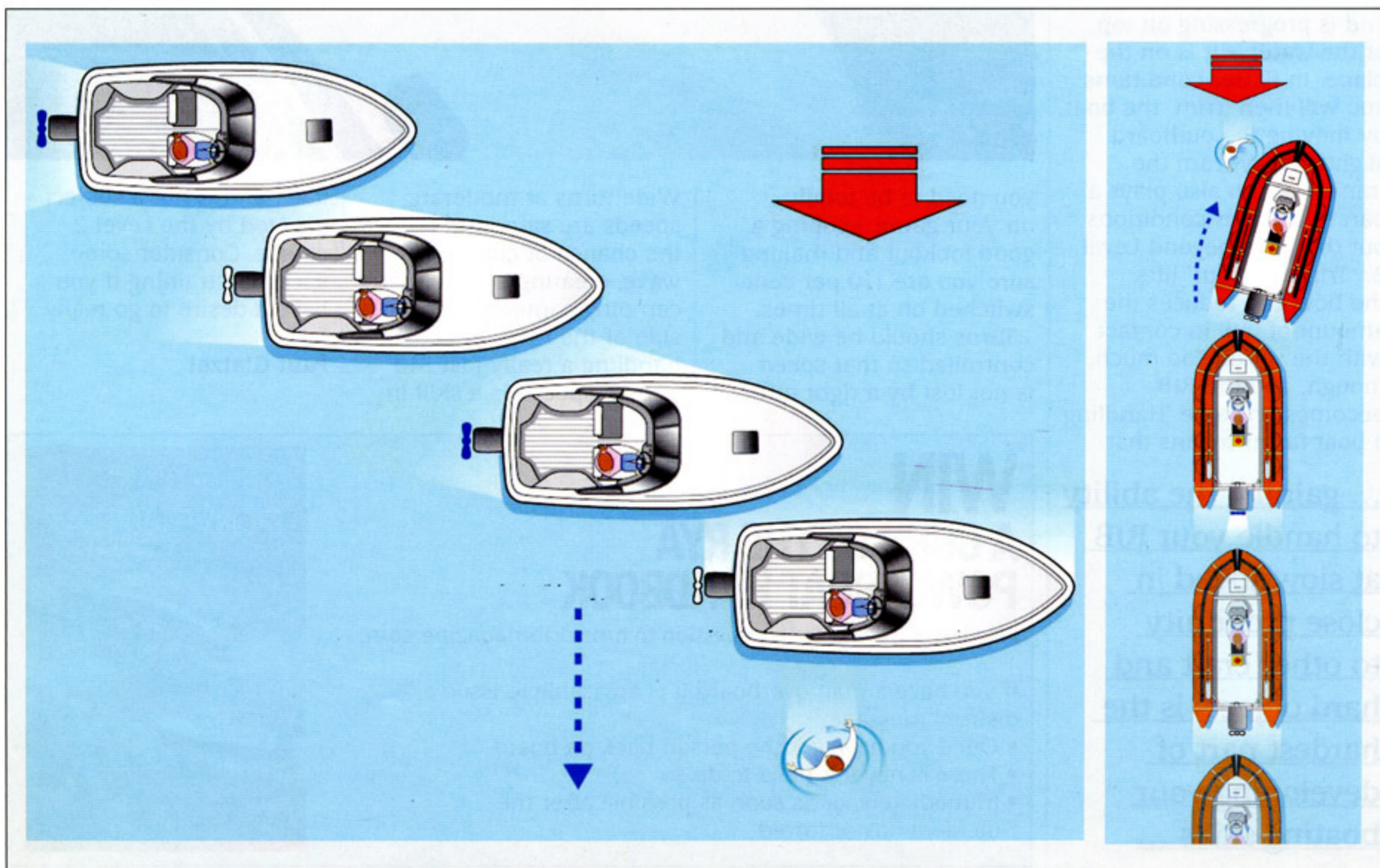
To retrieve the anchor, get your crew ready and start up. Gently ease forward to take the load of the line and recover the anchor. Make sure you stow it properly.

One of the most scary and dangerous things that can happen when you are afloat is a man overboard and this is why the Level 2 course spends plenty of time focusing on ensuring you have the skills to deal with the situation. There is so much to cover in terms of MOB that we can't really deal with it all here, so we'll just look at the key points:

Prevention is better than cure. A person overboard means that the skipper has usually failed to safely manage his/her boat. Be assertive in ensuring that your crew are properly

seated and holding on. Be careful with speed and communicate what you are about to do.

It's happened – what do I do? Lots of things! Firstly, slow down in a straight line; at the same time get someone pointing at the casualty and don't stop until they are alongside. Turn slowly towards the casualty and assess the situation. Make a VHF call (see below) and press the MOB button on the GPS. You need to work out where the wind is coming from as this determines your direction of approach. You have two choices: i) From about six boat lengths downwind approach the casualty directly into the wind. Go very slowly (into and out of gear) to reach the casualty. As they come alongside switch off the engine; ii) The other method is to position the boat side-on to the wind and drift down towards the casualty from about two boat lengths upwind.



Both methods of approach work well on a RIB so it's worth trying them both out.

Is an MOB a Mayday call? On Level 2 courses we teach that an unexpected MOB should mean a call to the coastguard. There is 'grave and imminent' danger to life and you will never know how each person (young or old) will react to their immersion, so a Mayday is the right thing to do. Get the assistance coming – it can always be stood down. Even if you get them straight back on board, still speak to the coastguard for medical advice.

Of course, going fast in a RIB is great fun, and part of the Level 2 course teaches you how to start to handle a RIB at planing speeds. Initially you would look at getting the RIB onto 'the plane'. At rest, the RIB sits in the water; as it starts to move it creates a bow wave in front of the boat. Power rises and the bow starts to climb this 'hump' of water. As speed increases it climbs over the hump and is progressing on top of the water – it is on the plane. In flatter conditions you will then 'trim' the boat by moving the outboard slightly away from the transom; trim also plays a part in rougher conditions but this goes beyond Level 2. 'Trimming out' lifts the bow and reduces the amount of hull in contact with the water. Too much, though, and the RIB becomes unstable. Handling a boat faster means that

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you need to be totally on your game, keeping a good lookout and making sure you are 110 per cent switched on at all times.

Turns should be wide and controlled so that speed is not lost by a tight turn.

Wide turns at moderate speeds are safer and reduce the chance of clipping a wave, creating a force that can ping someone out the side of the RIB. Obviously, handling a really fast RIB at high speeds is a skill in

itself and is not a subject covered by the Level 2 course. Consider some specialist training if you have a desire to go really fast.

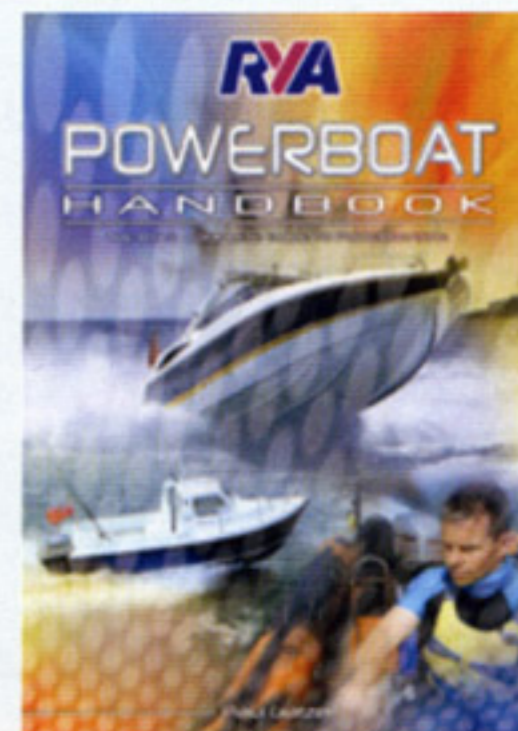
Paul Glatzel

WIN A COPY OF THE RYA POWERBOAT HANDBOOK

Email your answer to this question to hms@dribmagazine.com.

If you have a man overboard it is advisable to issue a distress message:

- Once you have got the person back on board
- There is never a need to do so
- Immediately, or as soon as possible after the incident has occurred



In the next article we'll have a look at charts and tides.