

The RYA, YRA and SBA

The following is a copy of the correspondence with the RYA during the summer of 2012 regarding the above.

To RYA

Subject: RYA History

Message: I believe that the RYA was formed out of the Sailing Boat Association. This was formed by a number of clubs along the Thames. Is the above correct? If so, which clubs formed the SBA and when?

From RYA

The RYA was originally called the Yacht Racing Association and this was formed in 1875 by 35 gentlemen who met on 17th November of that year in Willis's Rooms, St James. Membership of the YRA was to be open to "former and present owners of racing yachts of and above 10 tons Thames measurement and such other gentlemen as the Committee may elect" with the initial subscription set at two Guineas.

The primary purpose of the YRA at that time was to seek to produce a single code of sailing rules and yacht measurement rules that could be adopted by the then established yacht clubs or readily modified to suit their individual circumstances.

I believe that individual yachts clubs became members of the YRA sometime in the 1890s but I am not aware of the Sailing Boat Association being one of them.

The only reference I can find in Mr Fairley's book to the Sailing Boat Association relates to a disagreement in 1888 between the YRA and the SBA (and also the Boat Racing Association) over the YRA rule that at that time prohibited the use of shifting keels, which it was considered also might preclude the application of the YRA rules to small boats fitted with centreboards. Mr Fairley indicates that this disagreement was not resolved until 1921 when the SBA and BRA became "part of" the YRA, although Mr Fairley doesn't expand on this statement so it may be that the SBA was only finally subsumed into the YRA at a later date.