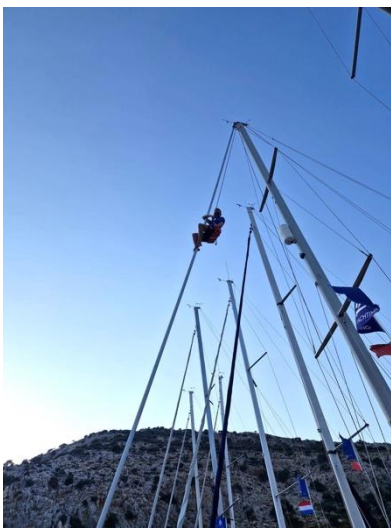




For those who don't know me, my name is Ben Chavasse. From a young age, I've always loved being on the water and spending time sailing. I've been a cadet member of the Royal Cruising Club (RCC) for about three years now and have had the incredible opportunity to take part in several cadet cruises, including trips to Norway and France.



I want to express my sincere gratitude to the RCC and the Marshall Fund for their generous support in helping me reach key milestones in my maritime journey. Thanks to their assistance, I was able to complete my Yachtmaster Coastal qualification, gain my Commercial Endorsement, and finish the AEC 1 (Approved Engine Course) — all important steps in developing my professional skills within the yachting industry. The RCC and Marshall Fund's dedication to supporting young and aspiring seafarers like myself has had a lasting impact on both my career and personal growth.



These qualifications have not only strengthened my confidence but also expanded my technical knowledge and improved my ability to operate safely and effectively at sea. The Yachtmaster course challenged me to refine my navigation, seamanship, and leadership skills, while the Commercial Endorsement opened up exciting new professional opportunities.

Completing the AEC 1 course also gave me a solid grounding in marine engineering and vessel maintenance — essential knowledge for anyone pursuing a long-term career in the maritime world.

I was motivated to apply to the Marshall fund as in 2024 I was first mate on the lead boat for a commercial flotilla in Turkey. I was offered the opportunity to return in 2025 as the skipper for which I required yachtmaster coastal. As I knew I would be required, from time to time, to do running repairs on our guests' boats I wanted to strengthen my understanding of engineering side of it all.



When I embarked on the yachtmaster course I had not have enough skippered miles under my belt to qualify me for the offshore yachtmaster. My instructor recommended that I pursue the Yachtmaster Coastal qualification which turned out to be a sensible choice. I needed a bit more time and experience at sea before tackling the higher certification. Looking back, I'm really glad I took that advice.

The Coastal course challenged me in all the right ways and helped me build the skills and confidence I would need for my role in turkey. In addition I know it has given me a strong foundation to work toward my Offshore qualification in the future. The Yachtmaster course



itself was definitely demanding, but it turned out to be one of the most enjoyable and rewarding experiences. There were moments when it really pushed me — long days on the water, tricky navigation tasks, and the pressure of getting everything right when it mattered most. Even through those tough moments, I was learning constantly and growing more confident every day. At first, I wasn't sure how I'd handle the responsibility that comes with skippering and making big decisions, but by the end of the course, I felt completely different. I'd learned to trust myself, stay calm under

pressure, and take control when things got hectic. That confidence has stuck with me — and it's easily one of the best things I've gained from the whole experience.

What really made the course special was how much fun it was. Being out on the water, working as a team, and putting everything I'd learned into practice was amazing. There's nothing quite like the feeling of sailing smoothly after a day of hard work and knowing you've earned it.

I took up my role as skipper of Aia a 422 Gibsea sailing yacht, with my partner as the flotilla hostess in may 2025 returned at the end of October. We cruised the bay of Fethyie with anything from 2- 12 boats following behind. It was truly one of the best experiences I've ever had. Being out there, surrounded by beautiful turquoise waters and stunning coastlines, really reminded me why I love sailing so much. It was the first time I'd been fully responsible for both skippering and some of the engineering side of things, which was both exciting and a little daunting at first. Each day brought something new — from planning routes and managing the boats to sorting out small technical issues and keeping everything running smoothly.



There were moments where things didn't go exactly to plan, but that's where all the training and experience really kicked in. I found myself using so much of what I'd learned during my Yachtmaster and AEC 1 courses, and it felt great to see it all come together in a real-world setting. What stood out the most was the sense of independence and confidence I felt.

One thing that really stood out for me was the assurance I was able to give my guests, some of whom were fresh from their day skipper course and some seasoned mariners. That I could safely guide them through this new sailing ground and help them sort out any challenges that they may face. Fixing the heads was on the less glamorous end of the spectrum whereas free diving to rescue anchors was quite entertaining!

Being trusted to take charge and ensure everyone had a safe and enjoyable trip was incredibly rewarding. There's something special about watching the sun set over the Turkish coastline after a long day on the water, knowing you've done a good job and that the guests are happy. The whole experience in Fethiye reinforced how much I enjoy this line of work and how far I've come since starting out. It gave me a huge boost of confidence and made me even more determined to keep building my career in the yachting world.



