

## Twenty out of twenty for Argyll-Ruane!

*BINDT-accredited training establishment Argyll-Ruane celebrates its twentieth anniversary this Spring. Insight editor David Gilbert visited the company's headquarters in Rotherham to find out more . . .*

When a student signs up for a training course, his or her ultimate goal is success – success not just during the learning process and the inevitable resulting examination, but also in the career he or she is to embark on at the end of it all.

Along the way the student needs support – support from professional and qualified trainers backed up by an infrastructure that attends to the logistics, administration and record-keeping that are so necessary but often under-estimated in the education, training and certification processes.

What is required, therefore, is a professional service provided by professional people – and, in the fields of NDT and related disciplines, that's where Argyll-Ruane Ltd comes in. This year celebrating 20 years in the business, Argyll-Ruane has established itself as one of the leading providers of education, training and certification packages and Level III services.

From humble beginnings in 1985, when Martin Dawson, David Betts and Terry Sharman first set up the company in Psalters Lane, Rotherham, the organisation has grown into what today is a major player offering one of the widest ranges of NDT, inspection and Level III education, training and consultancy services in the world.

The first one-week course on ultrasonics that was run by 'Ruane', as it is affectionately known throughout the industry (coincidentally this happens to be the middle name of founder and director Martin Dawson), took place in

September 1985 and the entire complement of students for this course was supplied by one Robin Shipp, current active member of BINDT's Technical Committee and then holding a responsible position in the power generation industry.

Today the company has 20 members of staff and is split into three divisions – Ruane & T P O'Neill offering education and training; Northern Test Centre handling examinations; and Level III services providing consultancy in the form of a BINDT-accredited outside agency.

The year following that initial training course in 1985, Ruane organised a total of 48 training weeks. In 2005 there are 500 training weeks scheduled, representing more than 300 courses, to take place in the calendar year.

The growth of the company led in 1992 to the acquisition of further premises in Meadowbank Road, only a few minutes away from Psalters Lane, and in 2004 further expansion took place in the form of a new centre in Halesowen, West Midlands. Courses can be offered at additional venues both in the UK and overseas, and specific arrangements exist in Ireland, Greece,

Qatar, Uzbekistan, Russia and Malaysia, amongst others.

There is multiple-centre access to examinations through the Northern Test Centre, thanks to partnering organisations in Aberdeen, Kirkcaldy, Cardiff, Malaysia, Qatar and Greece.

More than fifty standard courses are available from Ruane & T P O'Neill in the subjects of quality assurance, coating inspection, weld inspection, non-destructive testing and associated disciplines. These have been designed to



**Argyll-Ruane's Level III Services group. Left to right - back row: Phil Raw, Paul Johnson, Mick Mullins, John Moody, Robin Dawson and Richard Robinson; front row (seated): David Griffin (Director Argyll-Ruane Ltd and Level III Services Manager)**

meet the needs of both private students and companies, especially relating to the certification routes of ICorr, ASNT, PCN, BGAS-CSWIP, CSWIP, TÜV, EN4179, NAS-410, Metascop and API-RP2X. Specific accreditation is held by Ruane & T P O'Neill for PCN, ICorr and TÜV courses, in addition to a number of



**Argyll-Ruane's Meadowbank Road training centre**



**Students on an automated ultrasonic testing (AUT) course**



**Ultrasonics training underway at Argyll-Ruane's Rotherham centre**



**An ultrasonic testing examination in progress at the Northern Test Centre**

employer-based certification schemes including Rolls-Royce, Agusta Westland, Airbus and BAE. The company is closely linked to industry and is a member of the British Institute of Non-Destructive Testing, the Institute of Corrosion (ICorr), the Pipeline Industries Guild, the British Standards Institute and the American Society for NDT (ASNT).

Many of the courses offered are in standard form, however most can be tailored in content and duration to suit individual company needs, both in-centre and on-site. Several can be taken in combination – a useful feature for overseas organisations wishing to optimise their training programmes.

Much of Ruane's success can be attributed not only to the professional service it offers but also to the quality of the relationships it builds with its clients, both private individuals and organisations from all over the world. Many students return to undergo further training and several have been coming back time and time again over the 20 years since the company was established.

A large proportion of the staff have also pledged their allegiance to Ruane's over long periods, and this is recognised as one of the keys to the organisation's success. There are nine full-time professional multi-disciplined Level III-qualified trainers, examiners and service providers, all accredited in PCN, ASNT, ICorr and other relevant schemes. In addition, the services of external consultants are employed for some specialist areas, enabling a degree of flexibility to be offered in the range of courses available and where they are delivered.

The quality of the administration and support staff is not underestimated either – the provision of a professional service involves much more than simply running a course. The well-laid out practical and theoretical areas in the training centres are furnished with a comprehensive and up-to-date range of equipment, a collection of samples and consumables for all methods

and sectors that is probably one of the largest in the world, and all this is backed up by efficient admin and record-keeping and one of the best document support facilities available anywhere. Training manuals and course notes are stylised and constantly reviewed and updated to reflect changes in standards and technology. At any one time there are 40 sets in stock so that this essential ingredient of any course is available even for courses held at short notice.

Course notes are also developed for companies' own use on demand. This is one example which illustrates another of Argyll-Ruane's core strengths – it specialises in providing individual company needs by means of contracts that provide known costs combined with maximum flexibility of service. For many organisations, external Level III staff can provide the independence and, very importantly, a cost-effective route to access a multi-disciplined service. With its large complement of Level III staff with many years' experience, Argyll-Ruane can provide Level III services meeting the needs of ASNT, PCN and ICorr company requirements. The service can assist in the provision of written practices, procedure writing, reviewing procedures, analysis of standard requirements, training, certification of personnel and internal audit and review.

Argyll-Ruane is thus a major contributor to improvement in the skill-base of people and organisations involved

in non-destructive testing and inspection in industry in the UK and worldwide. Over the twenty years since its birth, the company has built a first-class reputation for providing a 'professional service for professional people'. A strong believer in teamwork, the company has the expertise and experience to help major companies, trade associations, even governments, to establish their own NDT and inspection training centres and offer ongoing support. Whilst having this capability it has not forgotten the individual student and the organisation prides itself on attending to the every need of the person taking the course, sometimes even that person's family too!

The range of courses and examinations offered is expanding all the time. Advances in technology mean that new courses, for example in automated ultrasonic testing (AUT), time-of-flight diffraction (TOFD) and thermography are being incorporated into what is already one of the most comprehensive training and examination portfolios available anywhere. The website at [www.ruanetpo.com](http://www.ruanetpo.com) is being re-developed and the Argyll-Ruane of the next twenty years is looking to maintain its excellence in core activities whilst developing a structure geared up to meet the training needs of the industry.

At present Argyll-Ruane performs an average of 3000 training and examination actions per year. The people undergoing those actions usually do so successfully and they go on to be successful in their future careers. For a company that gauges itself on the success of its clients, Argyll-Ruane passes the test with top marks.



**The painting/coating inspection lecture room is well-stocked in terms of samples**

Argyll-Ruane's 2005 brochure, with full details of all training courses, examinations and Level III services, is available free from Argyll-Ruane Ltd, Meadowbank Road, Rotherham, S Yorks S61 2NF. Tel: +(44) 1709 560459; E-mail: [enquiries@ruanetpo.com](mailto:enquiries@ruanetpo.com), or use the Fax Back Enquiry Service.

**Enquiry No 504-08**