



OCEAN CRUISING CLUB®

For Immediate Release

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## **Ocean Cruising Club Announces Awards for 2017**

**Dartmouth, Devon, UK, 22 January 2018** – The Ocean Cruising Club (OCC) has announced the recipients of awards that recognize achievements in blue water sailing over the past 18 months. The recipients of these awards were selected from among those nominated by OCC members.



The Club's premier award, the **OCC Barton Cup**, named after Humphrey Barton, founder of the OCC, goes to Germany's **Susanne Huber-Curphey**, the first woman to navigate the Northwest Passage singlehanded (west to east 6). She received extraordinary praise from Victor Wejer, who himself was recognised for his assistance with ice and weather reports by the OCC Award of Merit in 2016. He advised Susanne during her passage in s/v *Nehaj* (11.9 m cutter). He wrote to us that Susanne completed her passage "with great style, ability and perseverance, beating many experienced crew who were way ahead. She provided all support and

immense friendship to others, even when her own resources were at their limits."

In 2008, Susanne and her husband Tony Curphey were awarded the Cruising Club of America's Rod Stephens Trophy for Outstanding Seamanship when Susanne, sailing solo aboard her own vessel *So Long*, a 1964 Rhodes 41, rescued her husband sailing solo aboard *Galenaia*, a 1958 plywood 27 foot cutter, when it started taking on water 29 days out of Bunbury in Western Australia. She towed *Galenaia*, with Tony still aboard, for 650 nautical miles to Port Nelson in New Zealand under challenging conditions.



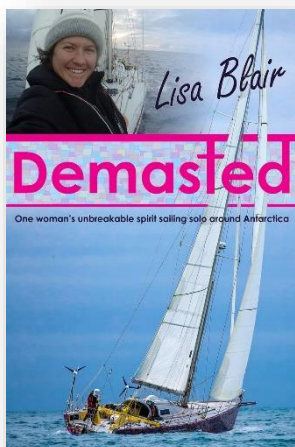
**The OCC Lifetime Cruising Award**, a new award for 2017, goes to British sailor **David Scott Cowper**, for tackling the world's most difficult sea routes while completing six circumnavigations and eight Arctic crossings using all routes available.\* His last circumnavigation took place via the Hecla and Fury Straits, in which he, accompanied by his son aboard the specially designed aluminium motorboat *Polar Bound*, became the first to navigate this passage since its discovery in 1822. This was his third

circumnavigation in *Polar Bound*.

Scott Cowper became well known in the 1970s and '80s for various sailing exploits, including competing in The Observer Round Britain and Ireland Race and the Singlehanded Transatlantic Race (OSTAR). In 1982 he achieved fame when he completed two circumnavigations in his 41ft Huisman-built S&S sloop *Ocean Bound* and became the fastest person to sail singlehanded around the world in both directions, breaking Sir Francis Chichester's record by a day and Chay Blyth's by 72 days.

Scott Cowper's move from sail to power in 1984 was based on his interest in the Arctic, where navigation often takes place under power. His preparatory cruise around the world via the Panama Canal in a former RNLI lifeboat, the *Mabel E Holland*, achieved him the honour of being the first person to circumnavigate solo in a motorboat, and the first to do so via sail and power. In 1986, he embarked on a circumnavigation via the Northwest Passage which took four years, concluding in 1989. In 2012, he made the passage via the McClure Strait, the most demanding and northerly of the seven known routes.

*The Frozen Frontier: Polar Bound through the Northwest Passage* about his polar expeditions was written by his companion and co-adventurer Jane Maufe. David lives and works in Newcastle upon Tyne. He is a Chartered Building Surveyor and a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, but his passion is sailing.



The **OCC Seamanship Award**, which recognizes acts of bravery or extraordinary seamanship, goes to **Lisa Blair** for her solo circumnavigation of Antarctica, which included a dismasting. She had sailed three-quarters of the way around the world solo, non-stop and unassisted in support of climate action when her mast came down in storm conditions. After a four-hour battle in freezing conditions she was able to save her Open 50 yacht *Climate Action Now* and her life. She called a Pan Pan then motored toward Cape Town to effect repairs. An attempt to transfer fuel from an 80,000 ton container ship resulted in a collision and further damage, but again she saved her boat, constructed a jury rig, and sailed to Cape Town, and two months later returned to her circumnavigation attempt. Lisa became the first woman to complete a solo circumnavigation of Antarctica, with one stop.

Benchmark Time: 103 Days, 7 Hours, 21 Minutes, 38 Seconds.  
Total Elapsed time: 183 Days, 7 Hours, 21 Minutes, 38 Seconds.

On a more recent voyage, Lisa battled an engine fire and was once again able to save her boat. She has recently completed the Sydney to Hobart Race with an all-female crew, in partnership with the Magenta Project. Her book *Demasted* is due to be released soon.

<https://lisablairsailstheworld.com/>

The **OCC Award**, which recognizes valuable service to the OCC or the ocean cruising community as a whole, goes to **David Register**, lead developer of the OpenCPN navigation software. OpenCPN is chart plotter and navigational planning software developed by a team of active sailors using real world conditions for program testing and refinement. Their motto: "We're boaters. We're coders."

Dave Register initially developed OpenCPN for his own use, as he wasn't satisfied with commercial products. After other cruisers saw what he was doing, they asked for copies of the software. There are now tens of thousands of active users. OpenCPN.org was created in 2009.



The product, still free of charge, is now available to run on Windows, Mac and Linux. An Android App version is also available for a small charge in the Android app store. There is even a version for Raspberry Pi. The system is available in 20 different languages and is constantly being improved and updated to keep up with newer charting systems and user requirements. It now incorporates AIS, routes, tidal support and weather. Plug-in modules are available for Climatology, Weather Routing, Weather Fax, Google Earth, Voyage Data Recorder, AIS-radar, SAR, sQuiddio, Radar Overlay, Logbook, and many more.

A network of more than forty volunteer software coders now work to improve the product, update it and expand its capabilities. Dave continues to co-ordinate this work from his floating home, *Dyad*, the Big Dumb Boat. See <https://www.bigdumboat.com/>

Open CPN has made a magnificent contribution to the enjoyment and safety of sailors cruising in small boats, and Dave deserves every bit of recognition for his invention and his ongoing efforts.



The **OCC Jester Award** goes to **Josh Ghyselinks** for sailing solo 2900 miles in 24 days from Mexico to the Marquesas in *Mastral*, an Arpege 29, built by Michael Dufour in 1967 (29 foot LOA).

*Mastral* was OCC Vice Commodore Tony Gooch and his wife Coryn's first offshore boat, in which they sailed about 65,000 miles. Josh bought her three years ago with the dream of offshore sailing. *Mastral* is even more basic than when the Gooches had her, as subsequent owners neglected her. She now has no engine – just an indifferent 9 HP

outboard – no windvane, and very little navigation or communication equipment. VC Tony Gooch, himself a solo non-stop circumnavigator, added, "Josh uses the poled-out storm jib method for self-steering ... plus bits of string and shock cord. Josh's voyage is taking him from Victoria across the Pacific to New Zealand (sometimes solo, sometimes with crew). What he really

wants is to find a single-handed girl going his way.” Trevor Leek, current owner of *Jester* after which the award is named, added: “Josh has my blessing – I’m particularly impressed by the lack of self-steering” (Most appropriately, *Jester* is steered by a vintage Haslar SP windvane).

Awards Subcommittee Chairman, Fiona Jones, said, “The subcommittee consists of highly experienced cruisers many of whom are underway in various parts of the world – some en route during or following a circumnavigation. They all have a first-hand sense of what it takes to stand out above the crowd. They recommended the winners from the slate of nominees, who were then ratified by the General Committee. We are very pleased with the outcome.”

“We had an extraordinary group of nominees this year – as we nearly always do – with high-achieving women up there along with the men,” added Commodore Anne Hammick. “It’s no longer enough to ‘just’ circumnavigate, as can be seen by the growing number of [circumnavigations](#) listed on the OCC website. Yet every year, cruisers’ achievements surpass expectations. We congratulate all the Award winners, but equally commend all our members around the world who aspire to challenge themselves on the world’s oceans.”

For additional awards that recognize members of the OCC for their contributions, please visit the OCC website [www.oceancruisingclub.org](http://www.oceancruisingclub.org). High resolution photos will be available upon request by emailing [PR@oceancruisingclub.org](mailto:PR@oceancruisingclub.org). The Awards will be presented at the OCC Annual Dinner, this year to be held aboard the *SS Great Britain* in Bristol, England in April.

## About the Ocean Cruising Club



Though it has no physical clubhouse, the OCC is the “home port” for those who have sailed long distances across big oceans. With 41 nationalities represented among more than 2500 members, and Port Officers around the world, we have a more diverse membership and a more international reach than any other blue water sailing organisation. Our Board and Committee comprise 7 women and 7 men representing 9 countries in Europe, North American and Australia, reflecting our diverse membership. Our Port Officers, Regional Rear Commodores and Roving Rear Commodores represent the frontline interaction with our current and prospective members around the world.

The Ocean Cruising Club exists to encourage long-distance sailing in small boats. A Full Member of the OCC must have completed a qualifying voyage of a non-stop port-to-port ocean passage, where the distance between the two ports is not less than 1,000 nautical miles as measured by the shortest practical Great Circle route, as skipper or member of the crew in a vessel of not more than 70ft (21.36 m) LOA; associate members are committed to the achievement of that goal. This standard distinguishes the OCC from all other sailing clubs. It’s not about what you are or who you know, but simply what you have done that matters. Our awards seek to bring to light the accomplishments of ordinary people doing extraordinary things on the world’s oceans.

Our membership as a whole has more experience offshore than any other sailing organisation – in the number of circumnavigators, in the range of extraordinary voyages members have completed, and in



the number of solo sailors and female sailors among our ranks. This is what sets us apart from other organisations, even as it draws us together as a group. We bring the spirit of seafaring to our association by always being willing to assist any fellow sailor we meet, either afloat or ashore.

Web: [www.oceancruisingclub.org](http://www.oceancruisingclub.org)

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/OceanCruisingClub/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/oceancruisingclub/>

Twitter: @OCC\_org

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\*Corrected 25/01/2018 to reflect most recent voyage of Scott Cowper via the McClure Strait in 2012 not as previously reported.