

OBITUARIES & APPRECIATIONS

W Redwood 'Red' Wright

Red Wright died at his home in Woods Hole, MA on 8th May at the age of 89. He was predeceased by his wife of 60 years, Mary Coffey Wright, just a few months earlier.

He was born in Philadelphia, where he and his three siblings were raised on a farm in nearby Glenside. During World War Two the family expanded to take in four more children, distant cousins from England. After attending Germantown Friends School he enrolled at Princeton University in 1945, but his education was interrupted the following spring when he was drafted into the US Army. He served as a radio operator in South Korea, returning to Princeton in autumn 1947 and graduating three years later.

He began his working career teaching at St George's School in Newport, RI, leaving after two years to become a reporter on a local daily newspaper. In 1954, he was hired by the *Providence Journal*, initially working in the newspaper's state staff offices in Newport but later joining the city staff in Providence as a general assignment reporter, working nights for the morning edition.

Red and Mary Wright were married in 1956 in Jamestown, RI, to which his parents and her father had retired. They lived in Providence and then Wickford. In 1960, after the birth of two daughters, they moved to Woods Hole, where he took a job as public information officer at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. A son was born the following year.

Participation in a couple of research cruises piqued his interest in oceanography, and he resigned his position to enrol in a master's degree program at the Graduate School of Oceanography at the University of Rhode Island. After a year of coursework, he returned to WHOI as an assistant in the Department of Physical Oceanography, studying deep ocean circulation. He received a master's degree in 1965 and went on to earn a PhD in 1970, writing his thesis on sources of energy for the deep sea circulation.

In 1976 Dr Wright moved to the Northeast Fisheries Center in Woods Hole, serving as in-house oceanographer. There he led a group that studied the circulation on the continental shelf, with his research focusing primarily on the North Atlantic, but also taking him to waters off Greenland, Brazil, and Japan. Six years later he resigned from the Northeast Fisheries Center to help found Associated Scientists, also at Woods Hole, doing consulting work on coastal oceanography. He was active in town government, and a speaker in the Woods Hole 'Conversations', an oral history project to preserve the life and character of the local community. In 1996 he gave a presentation on his lifelong love of catboats, having owned two in the previous 50 years, both named *Ferlie*.

Red Wright began sailing as a boy in Narragansett Bay, and joined the OCC in 1958 following a 3000 mile voyage from Newport to Santander in NW Spain the previous year aboard the 42ft *Alphard*. He also competed in four races from Newport to Bermuda and one from Newport to Annapolis, and for 30 years he and his family cruised local waters and the New England coast in their 31ft classic wooden cutter, *Mocking Bird*. In addition to the Ocean Cruising Club, he was a member of the Catboat Association and the Woods Hole and Quissett Yacht Clubs. At the time of his death he owned a 24ft sloop catboat – again called *Ferlie*.

Dr Wright was the author of some 20 scientific papers, two oceanographic atlases, and chapters in several books. In Falmouth he will be particularly remembered for his writings about local history and oceanography, contributing in the 1980s to *The Book of Falmouth* and *Woods Hole Reflections*. Later that decade he helped found *Spritsail*, the twice-yearly journal of the Woods Hole Historical Museum, serving as chairman of the editorial board until 1996 and continuing to write articles in subsequent years.

He leaves one son, two daughters, five grandchildren, two brothers and a sister.



Christopher Knox-Johnston

It is with great sadness that we inform members of the death of Chris Knox-Johnston, who died suddenly at his idyllic French home in Cercoux on 20 September. He is survived by his wife, Hilary, his two children Anthony and Paul, and his many grandchildren.

Chris was born in 1944 in Heswall, near Liverpool to which his family was evacuated during the war. He spent his formative years in Beckenham before moving to Downe where the family lived happily for many years. He attended Berkhamstead School before he and his elder brother Robin had a marvellous, if adventurous 18 months finishing the build of the now famous *Suhaili* in Bombay, and sailing her back to the UK from India, via Arabia and South Africa.

During the trip they ran out of money in Durban, and Robin went back to sea to replenish the kitty. One of their enduring memories of this trip was when Robin, returning to port in the ship in which he was working, suddenly heard a familiar voice on the radio doing an advertisement for shampoo. Because of the quasi American accent – “Your hair looks so lustrous, Honey” – it took him a minute or two to realise it was his little brother, who had managed to establish himself as the voice for such advertisements on the local radio station.

In 1968 Chris dived into local politics when he stood successfully for the council in Bromley. His time in politics was short-lived, however, as his brother Richard took over the mantle three years later. Chris always preferred the electioneering rather than the work of the council – an example of the showman he was at heart.

In the same year he was very lucky to find a woman who would put up with him for the next 50 or so years. Hilary was Dad’s childhood sweetheart, and her patience and sense of humour were more than equal to the various schemes Dad thought up over the years, in which she supported him throughout. He founded and set up various companies involved in yacht insurance, the last being Haven Knox-Johnston – now MS Amlin. He quickly became an expert in the field and was always respected for his knowledge, integrity and passion for the sector.

He also found time to run fêtes and fundraising activities, and raised substantial sums of money for the NSPCC* through use of the gardens at The Rookery, Downe, for old car rallies and village fêtes. He once managed to persuade Great Ormond Street Hospital

* The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, founded in 1884.

to lend him *Chad*, their 16ft teddy bear, for one of his fetes. Initially he did not realise quite how big the bear was, and after a failed attempt to collect it in the family car got a local farmer to assist him with his tractor – apparently quite a sight in central London. The event went on to raise over £1500 which, in 1970, was no small achievement. Then came the Bus – the iconic brown bus which he used as a stand at boat shows for many years and which became synonymous with his brand ... which was always a little eccentric to say the least.

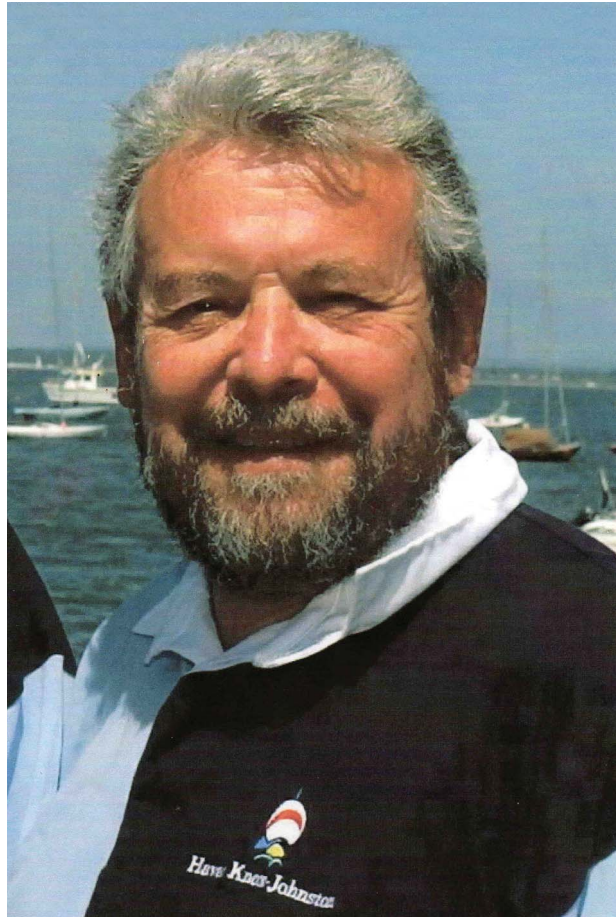
Chris could never be described as a sports fan, his one sporting strength being his swimming. His ability in this field came into its own when he was awarded a certificate by the Royal Humane Society for rescuing a girl from drowning in the 1970s. A true sign of his modesty was that he never really mentioned it, and only had the certificate on display at Hilary's insistence.

His main interests lay in more artistic pursuits, firstly acting and secondly music (with a large hint of overacting along the way). His many appearances with the Kemsing Singers, initially as a member of the choir and later as their conductor and musical director, were hugely theatrical and the flourish at the end of every piece of music was a sight to behold.

When he retired he knew what he wanted to do, and within months of his last day at work he and Hilary had moved into a new home in France – where his initially good grasp of French went on to become fluency as he dedicated the same passion to learning the language and to diving headlong into French culture and local society, including getting to know the local mayor. None of us were surprised when he took over another choir, losing none of his drive as he worked with them to create the music he so loved.

Whilst in France Chris continued to work in the insurance field as an expert witness, having built up a huge network of contacts due to his easy-going nature, integrity and knowledge. He also joined the team of *Flying Fish* proof-readers, the editor benefiting from his sharp eyes, depth of knowledge and humorous asides for more than a decade.

We are happy that he spent his last years at his piece of paradise in France, with his wife Hilary and his growing circle of friends. His endless sense of fun made him



so popular locally that there was standing room only at his funeral. His friend the mayor attended, and flowers were sent by the school where he taught music to the children. He would have been especially happy that the owner of his local vineyard also took the time to attend, although we did have to apologise for the drop in profits they should anticipate.

We all hope that wherever he is, the wine is good and whatever choir he has found are behaving themselves.

Paul Knox-Johnston



Ann Melrose

Ann Melrose, who died peacefully in her sleep the day after her 95th birthday, was our Port Officer for Ibiza for many years. She moved there from London in the late 1980s with her husband Denis, an eminent physician who played a crucial role in the design and development of the heart-lung machine still used in open-heart surgery today.

Ann joined the OCC in 1985, citing her 1981 voyage from the Cape Verde islands to Barbados in her ferro-cement *Endurance 40 Rosamelle* as her qualifying passage. This was also the trip on which I met her, when she advertised for crew on the tree in the town square in St George's, Bermuda. She and I sailed *Rosamelle* back to Plymouth via the Azores, which inspired the notion in her head of doing the 1986 Two-Handed Trans-Atlantic Race. So began a new project of selling *Rosamelle* and having a new, light 40-footer, *Mother Goose*, designed for the race, once again with me as crew. It turned out to be quite a tough race, with seven gales in the month it took us to reach Newport, Rhode Island, but it also served as a delivery trip to get Ann to the wedding of son Angus, who was to marry the daughter of the Newport harbour master!

Ann was the youngest of a family of eight and was brought up in Shropshire and Dorset. This rural upbringing with horses, hunting, fishing and the sea just down the road established an enduring love and appreciation of outdoor life, and it was during this time that she also developed her love of gardening. Ann passed the Cambridge School Certificate with honours, and was planning to go to

*Ann awaiting the launch
of Mother Goose ...*





*... and in Ibiza in later life,
proudly displaying her Certificate
of Appreciation as Port Officer for
the island from 2002 until 2013*

university to read farming, but this was prevented by the outbreak of war. Instead, she initially became a Land Girl, but not for long.

When encouraged to look for something more interesting she soon found herself lodging in Keble College, Oxford, and commuting by bus to work at Blenheim Palace – recently taken over by MI5 after its London base was bombed. During this time she met her future husband, Denis, who was studying medicine at University College, Oxford. One day at Blenheim Palace the Director General unexpectedly invited her to a meeting, and much to her surprise she was asked whether she would like to undertake training for the ‘Service’ (Secret). She went on to have a period of active service which anecdote suggests was terminated by

a blown cover. After that she spent time sitting at a desk in the corridor outside Mr Churchill’s Office in the War Bunker at Admiralty Arch, before being posted to the American Embassy where she was secretary to Averell Harriman, head of the US Lend/Lease programme, but she was not happy with the task and eventually resigned. With her Service connections her next task was to become a news writer with the Allied Press Service, sending specially worded news reports to those countries still occupied by the German forces.

Full details of all these activities remain elusive, but we do know that she had an exciting time considering that she was still a teenager at their start. While she was working long shifts in dusty, bomb-damaged London her lungs suffered. She was sent for treatment to one Dr Denis Melrose, who was then a junior doctor at St Thomas’ Hospital, and this time their paths crossed permanently, with a marriage proposal in Berkeley Square not too long after.

Denis had joined the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve, however, and was transferred to Hong Kong where their first son, Simon, was born. After a few years in Sussex, during which second son Angus arrived, they all moved to Putney for the next 35 years. Denis continued development of the heart-lung machine at Hammersmith Hospital, and Ann did some work writing scripts for ITV and others. She then started her own import/export business, which included trading old British mining equipment with

companies behind the Iron Curtain, and selling modular operating theatres for which she travelled around in her bright red Alfa Romeo sports car.

As well as these entrepreneurial activities, Ann managed to find time to become a watch-leader for the Ocean Youth Trust so she could teach young people about sailing, an activity she had converted to from horse riding with encouragement from her brother-in-law John Mitchell. In 1960 this led, with Denis's help, to them having a 32ft Arthur Piver-designed trimaran built. They sailed *Trinca* all around the English Channel, France and Ireland. The next boat they had built was the Endurance 40 which Ann sailed out to the Caribbean with a crew of four, one of whom was accomplished navigator Peter Corby (OCC), as Ann was dyslexic with numbers. As mentioned above, I joined her as navigator for the passage back to Plymouth, having just taught myself astro. This was followed some five years later by Two-Star (the Two-Handed Transatlantic Race), but by now there were occasional satellites to help us find Newport.

Ann spent her final thirty years living in Santa Eulalia, Ibiza, remaining there after Denis died in 2007, serving throughout this time as OCC Port Officer.

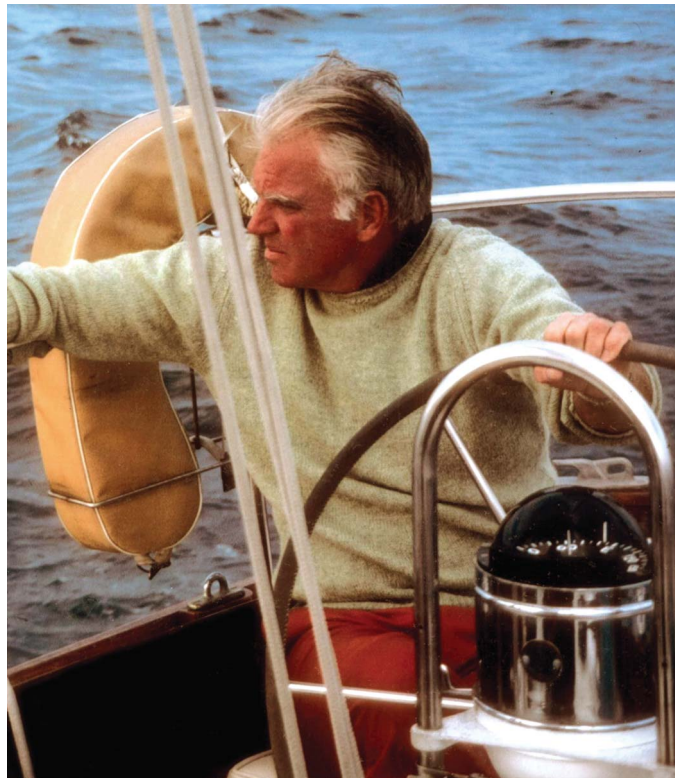
Angus Melrose and Erik Vischer



Sears Condit 'Nick' Winslow

Nick Winslow died peacefully at home on 12 February at the age of 89. He was born and raised in Boston, MA and attended Rivers Country Day, Brooks School and Nichols College before joining the Naval Air Reserve Training Program during the Korean War.

In 1952 he married Carolyn 'Cush' Crocker, making Manchester, MA their family home for over 50 years. His interest in business systems and new technology led him, with two partners, to form Systems Automation Inc, which provided companies in the Boston area with office automation, computer networking and training



during the very early years of computers. He also became a partner in America's oldest travel agency, Raymond and Whitcomb.

An avid Bruins fan and great skier, Nick was a former President of the Boston Madison Square Garden Club and the Ski Club, Hochgebirge, and was on the boards of Essex County Club and the New England Ski Museum. He served on the Executive Committee of the Manchester Yacht Club and played a major role in forming the Manchester Sailing Association, which was open to children from all over the area. He joined the OCC in 1995, having made a 2720 mile transatlantic passage from Gran Canaria to Grenada aboard the 60ft *Great Admiral* two years earlier.

Nick grew up summering in Gloucester, MA, where he started sailing and racing at a very young age. In 1974 he bought a Tartan 37, *Windsound*, in which for the next 20 years he and Cush cruised the coast of Maine and the St Johns River, often accompanied by their children and many friends. He also chartered in Tahiti, Baja California and the Mediterranean, as well as crewing for others on races to Bermuda and from Marblehead to Halifax.

Even after the onset of Parkinson's disease, Nick continued to spend time enjoying his favourite pastimes with family and friends – sailing, skiing and watching the moon rise over the White Mountains from their home in Franconia, NH. He loved a good party, and could find an excuse for having one at any time and often with a theme. In 2009, Nick and Cush moved to Edgewood in North Andover, where Nick was lovingly cared for until his death. Whenever he was asked how he was doing Nick would always respond, "nothing to complain about". He brought much joy and laughter to many in his lifetime, and will be remembered for his sound advice, business acumen, curiosity and a plethora of good-natured pranks.

He leaves his wife of 64 years, Carolyn Winslow, and two daughters, having been predeceased by both their sons. He also leaves three grandchildren, three great-grandsons and many nieces and nephews.



Josephine Sheard

Steve and his children Helen, Tim, Charlie and Richard are sad to report the passing of their wonderful wife and mother Josie Sheard in February, following a stroke.

For someone who spent a large part of her life on the sea, Josie was born about as far from the waves as you can get in the UK, in Burton-on-Trent. She spent her working life in midwifery, bringing thousands of babies into the world over her 28 years in the medical profession. Her family could not walk down the streets near their home without someone saying hello and showing off babies or growing children that Josie had delivered.

In addition to her work there were two other main parts to Josie's life – her family and sailing. The two went together, the family considering Swarkestone Sailing Club, on a lake south of Derby, their second home. Weekly club racing, the regional 'circuit' and annual holidays to Abersoch – camping and, of course, sailing – were part of family routine. Steve and Josie were very competitive club sailors, winning their



Josie and Steve in Peru

share of trophies in their Enterprise dinghy, and Josie was also the very proud winner of the 'Fastest Lady' in the Laser Class Club Championships in Poole in 1996. They also gained great pleasure from involvement in the vibrant Sailability programme at Swarkestone SC, enabling others to share the liberating and empowering feel of wind in the sail and water passing the hull.

Steve and Josie started sailing larger boats in the 1990s, completing their Yachtmaster qualifications in 1995 and buying their faithful travelling friend *Elysion*, a 41ft Formosa ketch, in Turkey two years later. Their westabout circumnavigation lasted for 17 years, including five years in the Med before crossing the Atlantic for another three years exploring the Caribbean. Then followed Bermuda, two years in the US (including a trip along Route 66), Central America, the Panama Canal, and visits to the Galapagos,

French Polynesia, Australia, Malaysia and Thailand.

Many members will have shared the same experiences and challenges as they did – buying and wrapping Christmas and birthday presents months in advance,



Elysion in the Caribbean in 2003

fitting in visits to the whole family on flying visits home, learning the many languages needed to 'fit in' with the locals and, for those who have families in cooler climes like Steve and Josie, putting up with the cold weather when back in the UK! The



Dutch barge Porthos, in which Josie and Steve planned to explore the European waterways

challenges and experiences of life afloat were shouldered and shared equally by their close partnership, and their adventures enriched not only their own lives but also those of family and friends, through visits to *Elysion* or simply chatting about their travels over a sundowner or drink at the bar.

Our collective memories of Josie will live on, both through the hundreds of shells and mementos which she brought back from around the world and the friendships that she and Steve made. Having sold *Elysion* in 2015, they had already started on the next leg of their journey, to explore the canals of Europe aboard *Porthos*, the Dutch barge they had bought in Holland in 2016. Steve is continuing with their adventure, and is currently over-wintering in Roanne on France's River Loire. If you're in the area, please do drop by and say hello.

Josie was a bubbly, lively, kind and gregarious person, who loved life and lived it to the full. We hope that you can join us in a toast to her at sundown wherever you are in the world, and to living life as free-spirited liveaboard adventurers, as Josie was herself.

Charlie Whewell



Bethany Smith

Bethany was born in Wrexham, North Wales, on 17 March 1998. Her early life was filled with playing with the family's three dogs and cat – and her beloved guinea pigs – at our home near Llangollen. She filled the house with singing and chatter, drawing and painting, Lego, and 'let's pretend' games with her younger brother Bryn, as time went on added recorder, dancing and swimming to her favourite things. When she was seven we bought our first boat, *Ariadne*, a 10m Carter sloop, and weekends and holidays were spent playing houseboat in Aberystwyth Marina, walking the dogs, cooking sausages or mackerel over beach campfires, belly boarding, and making good friends at the Aberystwyth Boat Club. We occasionally got to go sailing too – when the weather and tides were right, and when we headed to Ireland on holiday. *Ariadne* was fun but too small for a family of four, so we traded up to *Cape*, a 13m Oswald Berckemeyer-designed Gitana sloop, with dreams of selling up and sailing off. By April 2007 we had rehomed the pets, sold the house and cars, deregistered

the kids from school, started home schooling and sailed away from the UK. Bethany was nine and Bryn seven.

The next few years were spent exploring Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Morocco, Italy, France, Greece and Malta. We wintered in Portimão, Portugal, where Bethany learned to surf; Cagliari, Sardinia, where she perfected a fast and effortless front crawl; and Messolonghi, Greece, where she found her singing voice and started playing penny whistles. Everywhere we went there were towns and villages to explore, beaches to play on, reefs to snorkel, dinghies to be sailed, and kayaks to be paddled. She loved the local food and was game to try everything – particularly prawns, cheese, and chocolate! After leaving the Med we headed to the Canaries for a year, where Beth and Bryn were absorbed into a gaggle of cruiser kids. Here she added beaded jewellery-making and self-defence to her hobbies, as well as becoming a PADI scuba diver. From the Canaries we headed south to The Gambia, spending a month in Lamin Lodge where we tied in with a local charity, First Aid 4 Gambia, and Beth and David visited numerous nurseries and schools to provide first aid training to teachers and parents. We then took *Cape* 150 miles upriver to spot crocodiles, hippos, warthogs and birds.

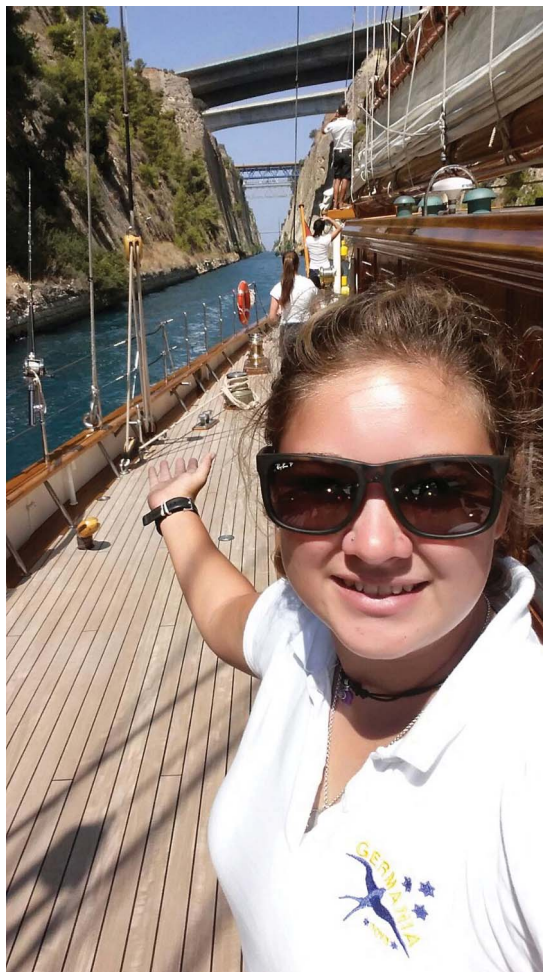
We left Banjul to cross the Atlantic on 28 February 2012, reaching Scarborough, Tobago on 24 March – a 26-day, 2700-mile passage and our OCC qualifying voyage – celebrating Beth's 14th birthday on the way. Over the next three years we explored the Eastern Caribbean, watching leatherback turtles lay their eggs, swimming with turtles in Tobago Cays, climbing Petit Piton in St Lucia, hiking through rainforests in Dominica and Trinidad – and tracking down other boat kids at every opportunity. She became an Advanced PADI diver, and learned to play the flute as music jams became a big part of family life. Sailing Optimists progressed to 420s and bigger boats, and Beth and Bryn were regular crew on *C-MOS*, a 13m sloop, sailing in local Trinidad regattas as well as making passages to Barbados and Grenada to compete there. At the age of 16, with the end of formal school looming, Bethany planned a career working on boats. Childish hobbies gave way to Carnival/*J'ouvert* in Trinidad and Grenada,



limin' DDI (partying on boats 'down the islands' of Monos and Chacachacare), and wake boarding. Her passion for art intensified – tattoo design in particular – and she took up photography, documenting her adventures in GoPro videos.

An elegant, 60m gaff-rigged schooner arrived in Chaguaramas and Beth was immediately off in the dinghy to talk to the crew and to ask advice about working in the superyacht industry. She returned having had a guided tour and with instructions to get back in touch when her 18th birthday was approaching. It was a very determined Bethany who flew to France that summer to stay with a friend-of-a-friend in Antibes and look for day work on the superyachts. She scrubbed acres of decks and cleaned a lot of heads, got herself known as useful on a boat, and was invited to race on the famous *Rowdy* – a 20m, 1916 Herreschoff-designed New York 40 – first in Antibes and then in Italy. By the end of the season she had earned enough to travel to the UK to visit family and friends, before returning to the Caribbean to sail with the International Rescue Group to deliver aid to Dominica following Tropical Storm *Erika*. She stayed on for a while to work with teenagers who had left school without literacy and numeracy skills, then flew to Grenada to join friends on *Twentse Meid*, a 16m Beneteau, to sail to the ABCs and Jamaica. After a short spell back on *Cape* in Trinidad she completed her Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping qualifications and was offered a job as trainee deckhand on *Germania Nova* – the classic yacht that she had fallen in love with previously.

She joined *Germania Nova* in Antigua just before her 18th birthday. They sailed extensively in the Eastern Caribbean before crossing the Atlantic to the Med, participating in the Superyacht Cup in Palma, Majorca, undertaking a dry-dock refit in Tarragona, and taking charter guests to Croatia, Montenegro and Greece. When she wasn't working she travelled in Europe to catch up with friends in France, Spain, the UK and Ireland before flying back to Trinidad to spend time with us on *Cape*. Back in the Caribbean there was more sailing with *Germania Nova* – to the islands off the north coast of Venezuela, to Cartagena, Columbia, and back to Jamaica. Her interest in the genre of tattoo art continued to



***Transiting the Corinth Canal
aboard Germania Nova***

grow and her plan was to work on superyachts until she could afford to put herself through art school and become a tattoo artist. Family, friends and fellow crew members have Bethany-designed tattoos, so her passion and art lives on.

Bethany was a 'people person' who never failed to keep in touch and travelled extensively to spend time with the people important to her. She loved unreservedly. She had tough times too, as we all do, but that never stopped her picking herself up, focussing on the positive, and moving on to the next adventure. She was happy – she had a plan and she was making it happen. She sent us a photo of herself just hours before she fell from the mast of *Germania Nova* in Port Antonio, Jamaica on 14 March, four days before her 19th birthday. She was killed instantly.

We travelled to Jamaica to battle with officialdom, also spending time getting to know the crew of *Germania Nova* who had been her family for the previous year – and who were as devastated as we were about her death. The crew brought her ashes home to *Cape* in Trinidad, and together with other friends and family we scattered them in the anchorage in Chacachacare. Afterwards we celebrated her life with music, dancing, Trinidadian food, rum and beer aboard *El Zorro*, 31m ex-fishing boat turned superyacht. This was a party that had lots of tears but also lots of love and laughter, and included swimming and wake boarding – she would have approved. Bethany lived her life to the full, squeezing more into her too-short life than many manage in a full lifetime. We estimate that she sailed more than 20,000 miles in the ten years after we left the UK. Following her death we received messages from people all around the world – people whose lives she had touched, and whom she had inspired by just being herself.

Bethany was proud to be a member of the OCC and carried a Flying Fish burgee with her to fly when she sailed on friends' boats, introducing herself to fellow OCC members and joining OCC gatherings whenever she could. David, Bryn and I would like to take this opportunity to say 'thank you' for the kind donation made by the OCC to the Bethany Smith Memorial Fund. It is this fund that has allowed us to stay together as a family while we come to terms with losing such an amazing friend, sister and daughter.

Sarah, David and Bryn Smith



*Bethany working on the mast
of Germania Nova*