

## OBITUARIES & APPRECIATIONS

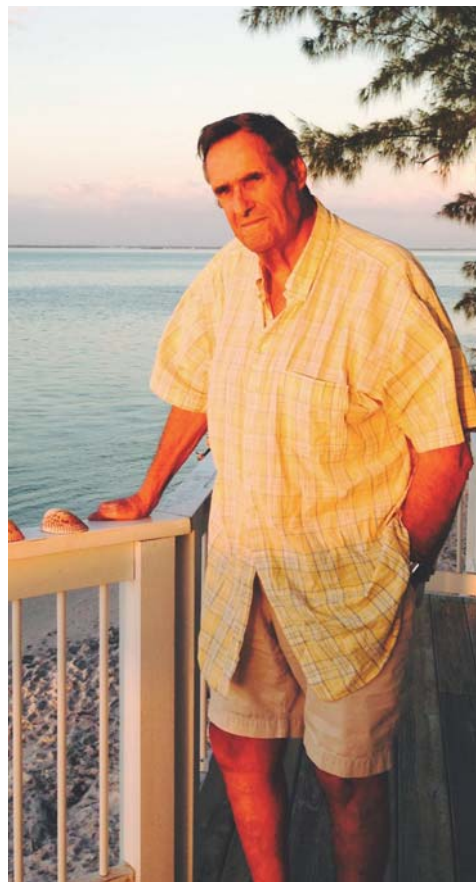
### Kenneth Wunderlich

It is with sadness that we inform members of the death of Kenneth Wunderlich, a two-time circumnavigator and OCC member for over 50 years, who passed away on 20 June 2017 in Revere, Massachusetts at the age of 84. He was proud of his membership and flew the flying fish burgee on all three of his boats. Although in his later years and no longer sailing, he still enjoyed reading about the passages made by other members, chronicled in the *Newsletter* and *Flying Fish*.

Kenneth graduated from Columbia University, NY and became an electrical engineer. Working in Research and Development for American Science and Engineering he was involved in many projects, including the Hubble Telescope and airport Cat Scan security systems. Later he would work at GTE in the Boston area. He married Bebe, his wife and sailing partner of 58 years, in 1959. His interest in sailing didn't start until his twenties, when he became friends with some serious sailors and was very influenced by a lecture given by two circumnavigators. While discussing the lecture with his cousin Patience Wales and her husband someone said 'we could do that', and the idea was born for the four of them to sail around the world together.

The first boat that Kenneth and Bebe purchased was a 42ft wooden Atkins ketch which they named *Kismet*. They set off in her in 1963 on their first circumnavigation, via the Panama and Suez Canals, which they completed in 1967. It was during this circumnavigation that Kenneth completed his qualifying passage of 2900 miles from the Galapagos Islands to the Marquesas, and he joined the OCC in 1965.

Since *Kismet* carried only 50 gallons of diesel, they decided to stay with the trade winds rather than sail closer to the equator. Bebe recalls that during the trip they developed a system of responsibilities in which a list of 100 routine duties were divided among the four aboard. This system worked extremely well, leaving no one person as captain, only as members of a team. Kenneth's strong points, which helped make the trip possible, were his incredible ability to analyse problems and develop solutions, along with his developing navigational skills. He practised the celestial navigation needed for the trip at anchor in calm waters until he was satisfied with the results, but his skills were called into question when they were transiting the Windward Passage in rough water and he calculated their position



as being in the middle of Texas! He became much more proficient in rough conditions as they proceeded.

Kenneth's love of the sea and long-distance sailing prompted them to look for a bigger boat with more speed and motoring range. They found that in *Boston Light*, a Skye 51, designed by Robert Ladd. She proved to be a wonderful sea boat, and in 1986 they set off again for a second circumnavigation, again with Patience and her husband. This time they were able to follow a route closer to the equator and visited places they had bypassed the first time, including the Marshall Islands and Guadalcanal. This passage was again sailed east to west through the Panama and Suez Canals and completed in two years, returning to Boston in 1988.

*Boston Light* was eventually sold and Robert Ladd was commissioned to design their dream boat, a one-off 54ft raised deck saloon cutter that was built in Ontario, Canada. The boat was christened *Boston Light II* and they sailed her on numerous trips down the East Coast of the US and to the Bahamas. They also found time to charter in various places around the world, as well as participating in trips sponsored by National Geographic.

Kenneth leaves behind his wife Bebe (née Kinsman), cousin Patience Wales, many friends, and his beloved cats.



Dick and Moira Bentzel



### Meo Vroon

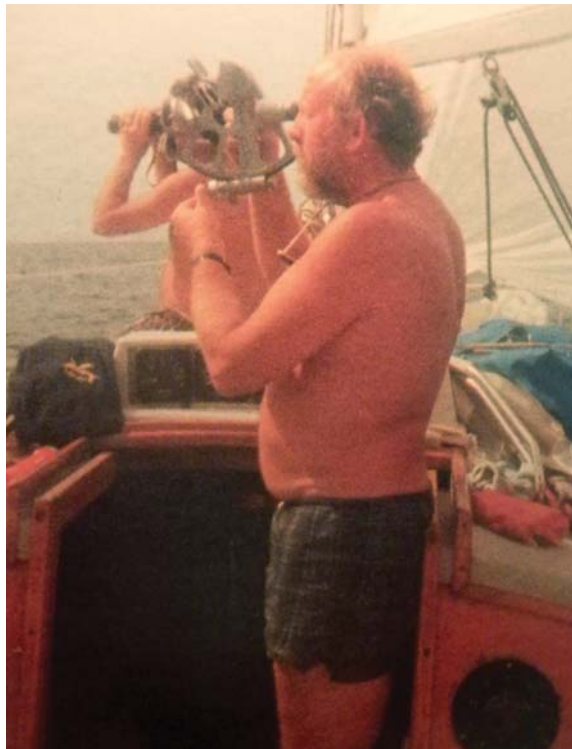
Meo Vroon was a man full of stories and a great person to be with. When I first met him, in January 2006 during the Ocean Cruising Club dinner in Zierikzee, Netherlands, he gave us a copy of his book entitled *100,000 mijl Zeehaas*, an ode to *Zeehaas*, his 37ft Tina designed by Dick Carter. (A 'zeehaas' is the Dutch name for a sea hare, a mollusc of the snail family).

In *100,000 mijl Zeehaas* he describes a period of more than 15 years during which he spent all his free time sailing *Zeehaas* on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean with family and friends. One of his famous sayings during tacking, according to his friend Pieter Blussé, was 'Don't stand on the children!'. This would be unheard of on today's

**Meo Vroon in a photo from his book '100,000 mijl Zeehaas' (note the flying fish on his sweater)**

roomier yachts. It is a wonderful story of a happy ship and an invaluable manual for anyone who wishes to race and cruise with family and friends in the most pleasant way possible. This he did around the Caribbean, French Guyana, Brazil, Suriname...

Of his eleven Fastnet Races, seven were on board *Zeehaas*, including the notorious Fastnet race of 1979. Meo also raced *Zeehaas* double-handed in the Round Britain and Ireland of 1985. He joined the OCC in 1979 after making a 3600 mile passage from Martinique to St Malo aboard the 65ft French schooner *Grand Louis*.



**Meo's motor yacht *Zeehaas*, in which he cruised European waters for 22 years**

He organised the last Dutch OCC event in Breskens, a tour of the Fishery Museum followed by a wonderful dinner.

Meo – a brilliant raconteur, generous friend and great sailor – will be sorely missed.



Albert de Heer,  
Port Officer Rotterdam

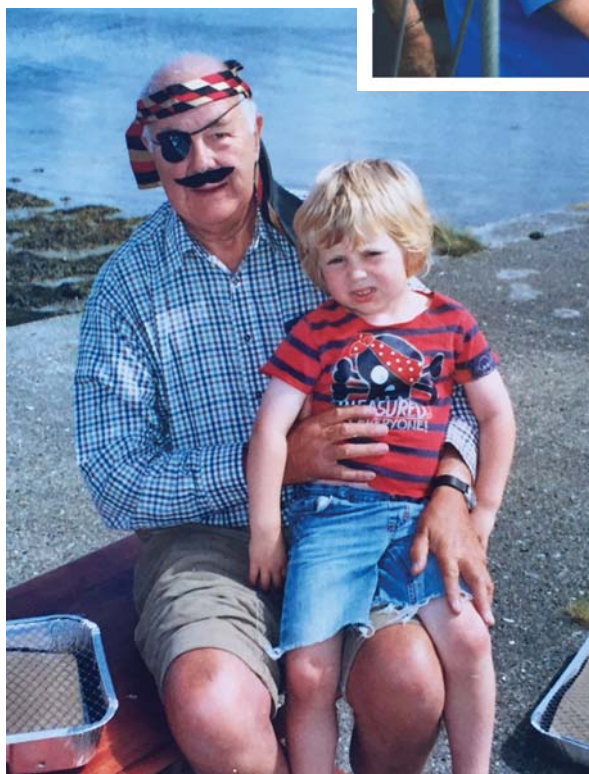


## Ronald Sharp

Ronald Linklater Sharp, 'Ronnie' to his many friends, not just on the Clyde but round the world, died quietly at home on 12 January 2018. Ronnie was in a very real sense two people. A quiet, efficient, behind-the-scenes member and often chairman of the many legislative committees which, throughout the '70s and '80s, worked so hard to improve the quality of yacht racing and yacht racing management not just on the Clyde but also on a broader scale. His achievements were recognised by his progression through the ranks to be Commodore of the Clyde Cruising Club and Admiral of the Mudhook Yacht Club.

*Ronnie aboard Ultimate, a Moody Carbineer which he shared with George McGruer. Clockwise from left: Ronnie, Dorothy McGruer, Sheila-May Sharp, Hamish Thompson, and George McGruer*

*Ronnie with his grandson William*



Ronnie became a formidable dinghy helmsman soon after joining the Clyde Cruising Club in 1948, moving on to the smaller keel boat classes before finding his real love of the sea in cruising and passage-making. This he enjoyed for over thirty years, many of them aboard *Ultimate*, his Moody Carbineer 46. He joined the OCC in 1980 following a 3000 mile passage from Marblehead, Massachusetts to Cork, Ireland the previous year aboard the 55ft *Cuilaun of Kinsale*. He made a second transatlantic passage in 1981, as well as a voyage from Darwin to Bali.

What is the 'vital spark' that transcends acquaintanceship and turns it into a true friendship lasting

over sixty years? I met Ronnie on the lawn of the Royal North of Ireland Yacht Club on a Saturday afternoon after a North Channel Race, and three weeks later had a beer with him on the hill overlooking Crinan harbour at the end of the first leg of the Tobermory Race. Since then we have sailed many thousands of miles together, including three of the Clyde Cruising Club's Blue Water Trophy Races and a Fastnet Race. We often had quite heated discussions but never ever fell out, and probably what I shall miss most are his, some would say old fashioned, ideas of honesty and integrity. I doubt if many are privileged to have enjoyed such a friendship.

Michael McKee



### Hugo Duplessis

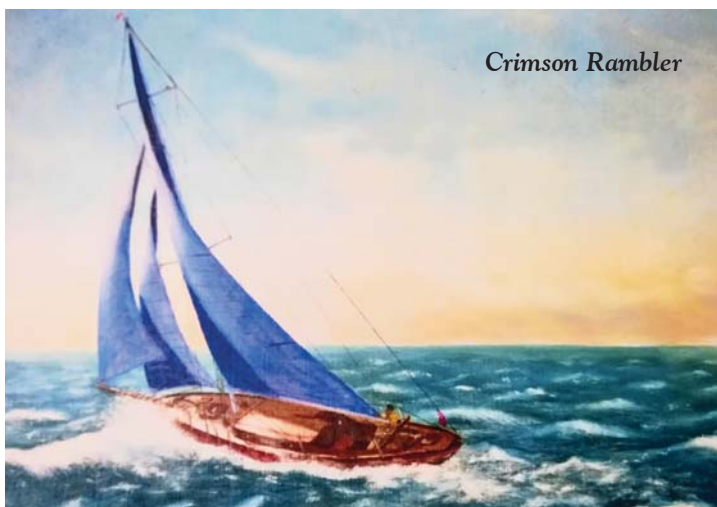
Hugo Duplessis, keen yachtsman and author of *Fibreglass Boats*, has died at the age of 94. He was highly regarded in the sailing world as an experienced cruising man, and in particular for his expertise in fibreglass.

Hugo was born at Newtown Park near Lymington, UK on 30 June 1923, where he and his sister Hyacinth were initially educated by a governess. He then became a boarder at a nearby prep school, his secondary years being spent at Beaumont in Surrey. He went on to study electronics at Southampton University, punctuated by the war. He was just 16 when the Second World War broke out, and served with his father in the Home Guard. Newtown was also home during this time to four young evacuees from Portsmouth, who stayed for seven years and with whom Hugo kept in touch all his life.

His childhood on Hampshire's New Forest gave him a love of nature and wildlife, and with the proximity to the Beaulieu and Lymington Rivers his love of boats was born, encouraged by his grandfather Col Barklie McCalmont. Many happy hours were spent negotiating the low tide mudflats in various craft, from a Sharpie to a canoe, progressing to adventures on the Solent and the eventual purchase of his first yacht, *Crimson Rambler*, a sistership of Humphrey Barton's *Rose Rambler*.

From 1942 until 1946 he was a radar technician in the Fleet Air Arm, working on the development of microwave radar for night fighter aircraft. His love of

electronics continued, as after the war he worked for a few years for Decca Navigator in Weymouth. His interest in fibreglass developed, and with it his writing, mainly of a nautical nature. He also cruised extensively aboard *Crimson Rambler*, visiting the Channel Islands, France, Spain and Ireland, often



accompanied by his great friend Tris Rigg. Later he met Joyce Keevil, a young pharmacist from London, and they married in 1952.

In 1956 Hugo's uncle died, leaving Newtown Park with some 350 acres to him. He resigned from Decca to take on running the estate, but as the inheritance did not have the liquid assets to match the fixed, he was unable to maintain the house. He reluctantly sold it in 1958, keeping a modest 30 acres on which he built a new home, in which he and Joyce were joined by their daughter Primrose in 1962 and their son Christopher the following year.



**Hugo at a Royal Cruising Club meet in 2014**

In the late 1950s Hugo went into partnership with Mick Hammick to found the Ropewalk Boatyard in Lymington, on the site which now houses Lymington Yacht Haven. He developed his knowledge of fibreglass and became an expert yacht surveyor of some repute, publishing the first edition of *Fibreglass Boats* in 1966. After his mother died in 1971 Hugo moved the family to Ireland, to Bantry Bay in West Cork, a place he had visited in his single sailing days.

As well as continuing with his yacht surveying business once in Ireland, Hugo set up the country's first yacht charter company in 1978, working closely with the *Bord Failte* (Irish Tourist Board). He was a member of the Irish Boat Rental Association (IBRA) and was the Representative for Ireland to the then EEC on all things nautical, travelling to Brussels regularly. He cruised the southwest of Ireland extensively and was Commodore of Bantry Bay Sailing Club for several years.

In 1986 he embarked on his lifelong dream, to sail around the world. He succumbed to the beauty of the Caribbean, however, and remained there for 15 years, living on his 36ft Westerly Conway, *Samharcin an Iar*, and cruising the island chain from Antigua to Venezuela. He returned to the UK in 2001 on the death of his sister Hyacinth, and moved into her house in Lymington, remaining there until 2016 when his health started to fail and he moved to a care home. He published the fifth edition of *Fibreglass Boats* – which by now had become a standard text – in 2010, and continued to write until a few weeks before his death.

Hugo joined the OCC in 1985, following a 1216 mile passage from Bearhaven on the southwest coast of Ireland to Madeira in *Samharcin an Iar*. He was also a member of both the Royal and the Irish Cruising Clubs, and an honorary member of Bantry Bay Sailing Club. He is survived by his children, Prim and Chris, his grandchildren, Nicola, Simon, Sam and Hayley, and by five great grandchildren.

Prim Duplessis



## Michael Rearden

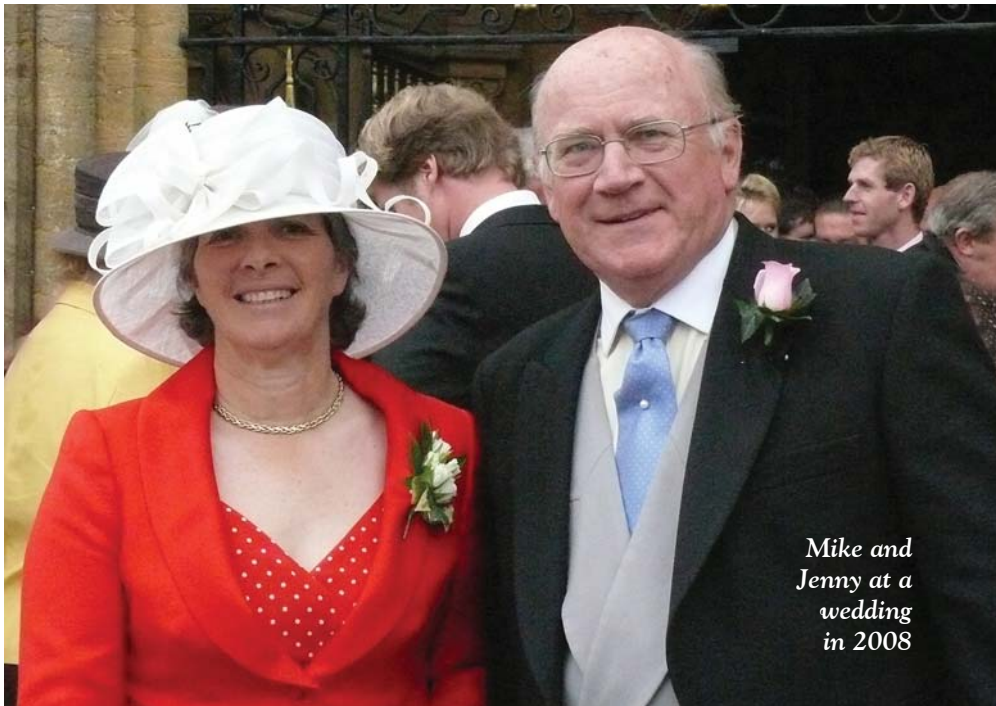
It was with great sadness that the death was announced, from pancreatic cancer, of Michael Rearden on 29 January 2018. He had sailed *Édain* back from Ireland in August. He is survived by his wife Jenny, his three children Belinda, Charlie and Georgie (the first two of whom are also OCC Members) and six grandchildren to whom he was known as Grumpy.

Mike was born in 1944 and at the age of six months was taken out to India on a troop convoy to live in a house on the outskirts of Calcutta. He learned Hindustani before he could speak English, and was probably one of the very last Sons of the Raj. At the age of seven he was sent home to prep school in England and thoroughly enjoyed the boarding atmosphere. At 14 he moved to Sherborne School, where he made friends with Johnny Russell whose parents lived in Beaminster in the house now owned by OCC member Philip Crawford. It was through Johnny that Michael learned to sail, first on the East Coast, then along the South Coast, and eventually in 1966 over to Ireland in the company of Howard Gosling. *Bon Sante* was a converted ship's lifeboat, replaced by *Herga*, a 28ft schooner, allegedly the smallest on Lloyds register. These were rough and ready yachts with traditional hemp cordage and no such thing as winches. It was all done through physical effort.

Following the death of Johnny Russell in a car accident at Christmas in 1966, Mike took to horses and had a lot of fun hunting with the Cattistock, where he delighted in being able to hunt on Saturdays and Wednesdays and commute to London on other weekdays. He served his articles and worked as an accountant in what was then Peat Marwick Mitchell and Co, subsequently KPMG. In the 1970s there was offshore racing in the summer and hunting in the winter, following marriage to Jenny whom he had met at the livery stables. Mike became Treasurer of the Cattistock Hunt in 1984 and continued in that role until his death.

*At the helm of Édain as she enters  
Clew Bay on the west coast of Ireland*





*Mike and  
Jenny at a  
wedding  
in 2008*

He joined the OCC in 1987, citing a passage from Lymington to Gibraltar aboard *Water Music IV* – owned by then Commodore John Foot – as his qualifying voyage.

In 1998 Mike purchased *Édain*, a Westerly Ocean Lord built for offshore cruising, and in the following 20 years they logged over 36,000 miles, visiting the Caribbean, then heading north through the Intracoastal Waterway to the Chesapeake, and on past Manhattan to Boston and Maine. *Édain* was over-wintered in Maine and returned via the Azores for the OCC Millennium Rally. There the family joined him, only to experience a strong gale on the passage back to France which put many of them off further offshore sailing with Mike. Two trips to Norway followed, together with cruises on the west coast of Scotland and Mike's beloved west of Ireland.

All who met Mike were charmed by him. He had a black and white view of life with few grey areas, and did not do political correctness. He was also a modest man who would not admit to working hard. Although semi-retired at 50 he spent many hours crunching numbers for his friends and family, often preferring a bottle of Bushmills to financial recompense. He took tremendous pride in his position as treasurer of the Cattistock Hunt, a duty he performed with diligence and care. Modest, careful, intelligent and thoughtful, he loved his family, friends, hunting and sailing. A force of nature – he will be missed!

Howard Gosling

*Mike in Ireland on his 70th birthday*





### **Steven Geczy**

Steven Geczy was born in Budapest, Hungary in 1925 and was a skier, sailor, hiker and mountain climber. He passed away in Calgary, Canada on 17 December 2017 at the age of 91. Following a career as an engineer he joined his wife Joan in the teaching profession, spending more than 25 years at Mohawk College in Hamilton, Ontario.

On retirement in 1990 Steven and Joan set off eastwards aboard *Okkomut*, their Aloha 34, for the 1326 mile passage from Sydney, Nova Scotia to the Azores, the voyage which Steven cited when he joined the OCC two years later. In Joan's words:

"We continued into the Mediterranean and our final



### ***Steven at the helm of Okkomut***

destination for the winter in Tel Aviv, Israel. If you remember back to those years, that was the time of the first Gulf War, which we got to experience a little too close for comfort. After being there for quite a while, in April of the next year we left for Cyprus and, via Turkey, Yugoslavia (another war) and Greece, we made our way back to Gibraltar. We decided to go to the Canary Islands for a while and provision there for our trip back across the ocean. We enjoyed our time in the Canaries

***Okkomut, in which  
Steven and Joan cruised  
extensively in the 1990s***



very much and met some wonderful people, but on 1 November we decided it was time to head out and began the crossing to Grenada.

We arrived there on November 26th. And slowly began visiting the islands as we made our way north. On 24 April we crossed the Gulf Stream to Florida and made our way to St Petersburg, where my mother spent the winter, arriving on 1 May. We ended up buying a condo there and spent the next two years exploring the Gulf of Mexico. Steven loved his boat, but as he grew older and we were once again living in Canada and spending the winters in Florida, the work and physical tasks proved too much for him and we had to sell her."

He leaves his wife Joan, his daughter Julianna, sons John and George, as well as three grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.



### **Brian Saffery-Cooper**

Brian Saffery-Cooper, successful dinghy sailor, Olympic Finn sailor, Half Ton Cup campaigner, member of a winning UK Admiral's Cup team and finally a worldwide cruiser and OCC member died on 31 December 2017 at the age of 83.

As a young man in the 1950s Brian sailed mainly in 14ft Merlin Rocket dinghies, in one season winning 34 out of 37 consecutive races. This was followed by a successful spell racing International 14s, after which he fancied a crack at the Olympics and was the UK Finn representative at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. That same year he joined the London-based timber company of John Lenanton & Son Ltd, where he remained for 27 years with responsibility for buying and importing timber and also selling to a few companies including some of the UK's top yacht builders.

***Brian at the helm of his  
Merlin Rocket in 1957***





At the end of the '60s he met Pam, a National 12 dinghy sailor. They married in 1970 and decided to buy the hull and deck mouldings of a Trapper 28 which they completed in a dilapidated garage in London. Several Half Tonners followed – *Racketeer*, *Zett*, *Buccaneer* and, in 1978, one of their favourite boats, *Green Dragon*. Brian and Pam, together with their crews, were responsible for much of the completion

work of all their boats. Also in the 1970s Brian was involved with the sailmaker Bruce Banks in the formation of the British Level Rating Association and, in his capacity as Rear Commodore Sailing of the Royal Ocean Racing Club, of the compilation of the official enquiry report on the 1979 Fastnet Race in which 15 lives were lost.

1981 saw a small Admiral's Cup boat, *Dragon*, designed by Ed Dubois being built by the Elephant Boatyard on the Hamble, again with much of the completion work carried out by Brian, Pam and their crew. *Dragon*, with *Yeoman XXIII* and *Victory of Burnham*, comprised the UK team and won that year's Admiral's Cup from 15 other countries. *Dragon* joined the UK team for the Sardinia Cup in 1982, and in 1983 she again made the UK Team for the Admiral's Cup – but this time Germany won.

By then Brian and Pam fancied a change from racing and in late 1985 took delivery of an Oyster 435. This gave them a taste for cruising, but the boat's performance was too tame for Brian's liking so in 1988 she was sold in favour of another racing boat, an X119, which they only kept for quite a short period.

*Aboard Lucky Dragon  
in the Îles des Saintes*





In the spring of 1991 Brian took early retirement and they decided to go cruising seriously. They bought a 42ft yacht designed by Sparkman and Stephens which was renamed *Lucky Dragon*. They left Falmouth in October 1991 for the Canaries to join the ARC, but 400 miles after leaving Las Palmas their electrics failed and they turned back, facing 400 miles on the wind to reach Mogán, Gran Canaria. Repairs were made after which they crossed to St Lucia in 18 days, where they met OCC members Jean and Graham Payne in *Deception* and Nina and Tony Kiff and their family in *Weatherly*. (Nina has been OCC Port Officer in Opuā, NZ since 1997). They enjoyed sailing in the Windward and Leeward Islands before heading north to Bermuda and Maine where they were befriended by OCC stalwarts Carole and Bob Cassatt, sadly now deceased. Their few months cruising in Maine were one of the highlights of their cruising years, but come September the cold and fog drove them south again. They cruised the eastern seaboard of the United States, calling at various ports, and left *Lucky Dragon* at Jacksonville, Florida over Christmas. In mid-January 1993 they sailed for the British Virgin Islands and spent the year cruising the Caribbean before ending up in Cartagena, Colombia for Christmas where they met fellow cruisers who were planning to cross the Pacific. They left Panama in April 1994, calling at the Las Perlas islands, Galapagos, Marquesas, Tuamotus, Society Islands, Tonga and Fiji before arriving in Opuā, New Zealand in November.

They loved New Zealand and cruised extensively along the east coast of North Island. One year they sailed north, round North Head and down the inhospitable west coast to Tasman Bay in the north of South Island, where they left *Lucky Dragon* in a marina and bought an old banger to tour South Island by car. For four years they spent the southern summer in New Zealand, returning to the UK for the northern summer. They then shipped *Lucky Dragon* to Savannah, Georgia and returned to the Caribbean where they continued to cruise for several years during the winter months until Brian began to experience health problems and had to return home to Cowes, Isle of Wight.

They joined the OCC in 1993, soon after arriving in the Caribbean, and enjoyed all the friendship that flying the burgee brought. After their return to the Caribbean in 1998 Brian instituted the daily sundowner net, when OCC members and others would exchange information and, most importantly, advice about the problems experienced by long-distance cruising people. This was of great value to many and was continued after Brian was unable to continue. He will be missed.

Pam Saffery-Cooper and Peter Cook



### Graham Leech

Graham was born on 7 June 1941 in Manchester, moving a couple of years later to Bournemouth. He was an only child, growing up on the beach at Sandbanks and attending Poole Grammar School for Boys. At 11 he joined the Sea Scouts, igniting his passion for sailing. A junior member of Parkstone Yacht Club, he raced his dinghy keenly and had the opportunity to sail an XOD boat.

***Crossing the Equator in 2006  
en route to the Galapagos***

After training as a chef at the Grosvenor House Hotel Graham completed two years in the Hotel School of Westminster Technical College, where he passed his professional Hotel and Catering Institute exams. He was appointed Junior Assistant Manager at the Sandbanks Hotel, where he met Jane. They married in 1964 and bought a cafe in Totnes, Devon. Seven years later, and now with two children, they sold the cafe and bought and renovated the Seymour Hotel in Totnes. In 1978 the family moved to the St Moritz Hotel in Trebetherick, Cornwall.

Following Jane's death in 1991 Graham renewed his love of sailing. After three months cruising Brittany aboard a Hunter 27 with friends Mike and Felicity Arnott, and deciding a little more space was needed, they went into partnership to buy *Thursday's Child of Lee*, a 36ft Westerly Corsair. Sailing her straight down to the Mediterranean, they cruised from the Balearics to Rhodes, Greece.

Tanya, a keen dinghy racer, and Graham were both members of Rock Sailing Club in Cornwall, though Tanya's experience of cruising was limited to some Army Adventure Training involving changing headsails during cold, lumpy, seasick Channel crossings. Graham whisked her off to Greece for three weeks of gentle island hopping and they were married in 1995. After another season in the Mediterranean they sailed *TC*, as she was affectionately known, home for a re-rig before setting off on their first long passage, completing the 1998 ARC from the Canaries to St Lucia. A chance meeting with

Angela Farrant (OCC) in Trinidad led to them joining the OCC Millennium



***Graham  
and Tanya  
in Western  
Australia in  
December  
2017***

party in Grenada and Mike Pocock proposing them for membership.

For the next eight years TC spent hurricane season in Trinidad's Power Boats yard, except for one year when they sailed her up to the Chesapeake via Haiti and Cuba. Winters were spent island hopping from Venezuela and Tobago up to the Virgin Islands, with many OCC gatherings along the way. At home in Cornwall –



where they raced a Cornish Shrimper competitively – Tanya, with much support from Graham, worked hard for seven months each year building her own interior design business, generating enough cash to finance the next five months of sailing.

In 2006, having visited most of the anchorages of the Eastern Caribbean, they headed west to Panama. Unfortunately, before they transited the Canal Graham realised he had a problem with one eye, diagnosed as a detached retina. An emergency operation followed but the retina refused to heal properly. In the end, a planned stopover of a week or two turned into a tedious three months of operations and treatment. Eventually given the all clear, they set off for the Galapagos, Marquesas and Kauehi in the Tuamotus. Being very late in the season they enjoyed deserted anchorages, but they met few other cruisers and, not wishing to rush across the Pacific, decided to leave the boat in Tahiti for the cyclone season. Returning in 2008 they completed the passage to New Zealand via Rarotonga, Nuie, Tonga and Minerva Reef. Sadly, this was to be their last passage in TC, as a battery explosion while Graham was getting the boat ready in the yard in Whangerei in 2010 caused a devastating fire on board.

The following year they bought *Truant*, a Hallberg Rassy 312, keeping her at Mylor, Cornwall. Deciding that they wanted to live close to the boat, they bought and demolished an old bungalow and built a contemporary house overlooking the creek. Many weekends were spent anchored in St Mawes and the Helford, with longer trips to France and the Scillies.

They cruised frugally, without a watermaker, generator or even an electric anchor windlass. As far as Graham was concerned, one of the most important bits of kit was a mug rack in the cockpit for his coffee! They only ever sailed two-handed, and were never skipper and mate but always an equal partnership. Their roles were the reverse of the norm, with Tanya navigating whilst Graham was always more than happy in the galley – indeed he did all the cooking throughout their 23 year marriage!

Graham was always young at heart. He was funny, laid-back, kind, sociable, hospitable, loyal and extraordinarily patient and they were a tight knit little team of two. He died very suddenly at home on 2 February, without any warning, and is very much missed.

Tanya Leech



## David Whitehead

David Whitehead, who died on 27 November 2017 aged 75, was a mine of information and never lost for words. Whether it was boats, maritime history, mountaineering, rugby, climate change or electric cars, you could be certain that David would have a well thought-out position. Where this differed from the accepted or establishment view, he always had the facts lined up to prove his case, backed up by his incomparable memory.

Having moved to Galway in the 1960s, he sailed up and down the west coast of Ireland and further beyond, mainly with his friend David Fitzgerald. His training as a geologist found him working with mining concerns around the world but wherever he was, he found time to sail. He was a founder member of the Galway Bay Sailing Club, and became a member of the Royal Ocean Racing Club, the Irish Cruising Club and the Royal Cruising Club. In 2004 he joined the OCC, having completed a passage from Gran Canaria to St Lucia aboard the 45ft *La Contenta* the previous year.

Over the years David owned boats large and small. His first was a 16ft Paul Gartside-designed gaffer, and his last, *Goblin*, a 16ft Chesapeake Bay microcruiser which he adapted for gunkholing around the creeks of Galway Bay. He also co-owned *Mystic*, a Moody 27, with close friend Peter Fernie.



*David Whitehead aboard Mystic, passing Eagle Island en route to Scotland in 2016*

In 2009 he was diagnosed with lung cancer, which he attributed to working in an Australian uranium mine. Even so, only three months later and despite major surgery, he sailed his Oyster Mariner 35 ketch *Joyster* to Tory Island and Lough Swilly. David was always out sailing, despite a permanently compromised respiratory system, with cruises to Wales, Brittany, the Isles of Scilly and the Aeolian Islands, as well as the south and west coasts of Ireland. In 2016 he sailed from Galway to the Hebrides and

back around Ireland clockwise to Galway aboard *Mystic*, in company with Peter Fernie.

Our condolences go to David's wife Marie, his son Duncan, his daughters Jennifer and Siobhan, his grandchildren, and his extended family and many friends.

Alex Blackwell,  
with input from Peter Fernie



### **Mike Yendell**

Mike Yendell died at home on 10 June 2017 aged 71. He was born near Exeter in Devon, and a lifetime love of sailing was sparked by his father. He was a very practical man with many skills, a lively analytical mind, and a dogged determination which he brought to all areas of his life.

He was a graduate of Cambridge and Southampton Universities and worked in a business/educational capacity, in 1984 taking up a post at Strathclyde University in Glasgow as an interface between these two areas. In his last job there he focused his abilities on setting up and running the Entrepreneurship Centre, offering courses to students of all disciplines, something relatively new in UK universities at the time.

In the early 1970s Mike and a friend bought *Cooya*, a 40ft Linton Hope yawl, built of teak on oak in 1914, and together they used their skills to rebuild her interior and transform her into a comfortable cruising yacht. After a few years Mike bought his friend's share and continued to cruise when time allowed. Moving to the west coast of Scotland opened new cruising areas, and early retirement allowed him

*Fishing in Icelandic  
waters, 2016*





*Cooya in Croatia,  
June 2013*

to really pursue his passion for sailing and travelling long distance, as well as hill walking, sailing with his wife and sometimes family and friends. It was his ideal way to travel – slowly, meeting and enjoying conversations with interesting people, and experiencing different cultures.

Mike joined the OCC in 2009, having qualified with a 1432 mile voyage from Cabadelo, Brazil to Île du Saint, French Guiana aboard *Cooya* the previous year. He particularly loved sailing to unusual places, little visited by sailors, and his determined ‘can do’ attitude and persistence found him getting permission to visit Libya, a country he had visited for work, and a thrill to sail to, where he was hosted by local people and had the pleasure of enjoying the local culture.

Never defeated, he could usually work out how to fix anything, but as he said, ‘nothing lasts forever’ – however his memory will. He is survived by his wife Eilean and children Alan, Suzy and Chris.

Eilean Yendell



### **Sophie Beeton**

Kind, compassionate, loving and ‘with a smile like a ray of sunshine that would light up a room’ have all been used to describe Sophie Beeton, who sadly passed away in January this year. A classical musician, supply teacher, and member of New Forest





District Council responsible for the environment and coastal protection, Sophie was dedicated to helping others and worked tirelessly to enhance and protect the environment where she lived.

Born in Winchester, England on 16 March 1971, Sophie was a talented musician, performing with the Hampshire Youth Orchestra and London Symphony Chorus. She studied music at King's College London, the violin at the Royal College of Music, and the viola under Keith Lovell. Following teacher training she became a highly respected supply teacher, often being specifically requested by schools as their first choice as a cover teacher.

Sophie learnt to sail in 1997 on a 24ft Wharram catamaran. Two years later she met Alastair Beeton, and they quickly discovered a shared enthusiasm for scuba diving and sailing. They were married in December 2001 and would often sail their Wayfarer dinghy in club events at Lymington Town Sailing Club. That led to an invitation to crew on a Moody 333 in club races and on cruises along the South Coast and to France. Sophie also enjoyed racing a Folkboat with friends she met through the OCC.

*Sophie aboard Jo in St Lucia*





*Sophie and Alastair assisting on the OCC stand  
at Southampton Boat Show in 2016*

In 2014 Alastair was asked to crew aboard *Jo*, a Sweden 42, on the ARC, and when he mentioned it to Sophie she said 'Great! When are we going?'. Her disappointment in not being able to do the crossing herself was short-lived when members of the sailing club told her she should only let Alastair go if he flew her out to meet him! Sophie became an associate member of the OCC in 2015, and she and Alastair helped out on the OCC stand at the Southampton Boat Show.

Away from sailing Sophie enjoyed scuba diving, gardening and the environment. Some highlights of her diving included seeing seahorses in the English Channel and diving with dolphins and turtles in the Seychelles. She was a keen walker and loved animals, especially guinea pigs. She and Alastair were planning a circumnavigation before she was diagnosed, in November 2016, with an incurable stage 4 brain tumour. Despite this diagnosis Sophie never gave up hope and stayed positive throughout her illness, often wearing her Team GB T-shirt and saying that she was 'going for gold'. She never complained and would say, 'I don't know why I have this brain tumour, but I do and there is nothing that anyone can do about it, so what is the point of worrying about it'.

An amazing person, Sophie's courage in coping with her illness touched the hearts of everyone who met her. She passed away peacefully on 12 January in Alastair's arms, and with her guinea pigs beside her. Nearly 300 people attended a service to celebrate her life at Milford-on-Sea parish church where Sophie was laid to rest.

Alastair Beeton

