

OBITUARIES & APPRECIATIONS

Dave (Skaffie) Beard

Long-time OCC member Skaffie Beard passed away on 22nd April 2019. He had joined the OCC in 1956, not long after the club's foundation, having been proposed for membership by Founder Members John and Bonnie Staniland of *Carina*. He was very proud of his membership and, right to the end of his life, waited with great anticipation for the next edition of *Flying Fish* to arrive in his mailbox.

Skaffie began sailing on England's Norfolk Broads aged 14, in a 16ft destroyer's gig purchased from Navy Disposals for £10. At 16 he joined the Merchant Navy as a deck boy,



A youthful Skaffie reads his sextant

working up to the position of First Mate. In 1955 he and school friend Gordon crossed the Atlantic in *Skaffie*, a 20ft sloop (hence David's nickname), and while in New Zealand the following year he met two New Zealanders who needed a navigator for a voyage to Australia.

David's life in Australia revolved around the sea. He owned and operated cruises on the Gippsland Lakes in Victoria and skippered the *Nuniong* as mothership for the 1959 Sydney Hobart Race. In Tasmania he fished for salmon and in Queensland waters worked on Lighthouse Service vessels. He was master of the Australian Institute of Marine Science research vessel *Lady Basten* for 15 years, and frequently skippered the 33m sail training vessel *South Passage* along the Queensland coast, carrying 25 trainees.

Between 1974 and 1977 David and his first wife Jo, together with their two young children, circumnavigated the

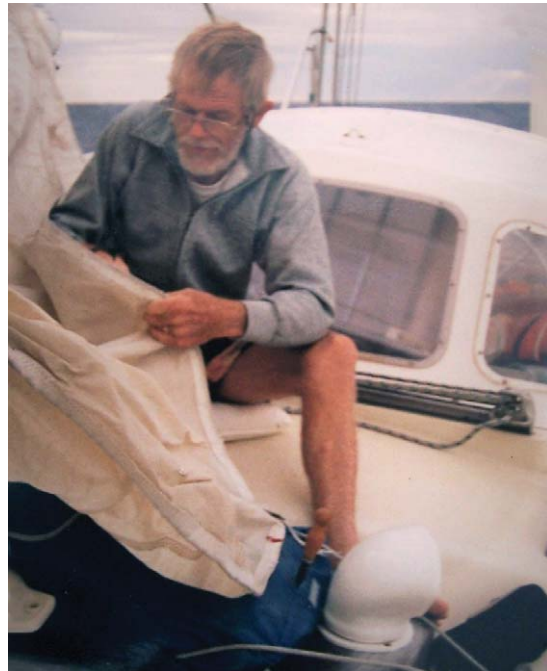
globe in *Nerisha*, a 39ft sloop which he had built in his back yard in Brisbane. Then in 1990 he became the first person to circumnavigate Australia singlehanded and non-stop, a distance of 7000 miles in 68½ days, for which he received both the 1991 Rose Medal and the 1991 Australian Trophy. This epic voyage was entered in the Australian Guinness Book of Records under 'Transport', and recounted in his book, *I Can Sail Circles*. Due to his intimate knowledge of the Great Barrier Reef gained whilst sailing the *Lady Basten* it was achieved without the aid of a GPS.

David made his second global circumnavigation between 1997 and 2000 with his second wife, Kerry, in *Skaffies Romance*, and was again awarded the Australian Trophy. Then in 2001–2 he sailed to the Antarctic aboard the *Sir Hubert Wilkins*, on an expedition to inspect and work on Mawson's Hut* and to dismantle and remove McIntyre's Hut.

He served the Club as Regional Rear Commodore Australia from 2009 to 2010 and was OCC Port Officer for Brisbane for many years. His contributions to *Flying Fish* will be found in 1991/1, 2001/2 and 2005/2.

Nick Halsey

* Erected and occupied by the Australasian Antarctic Expedition of 1911–1914, led by geologist and explorer Sir Douglas Mawson.



Sail repairs following a knockdown off Cuba in 2000, during his second circumnavigation

Skaffie in his element at the helm of Matuki

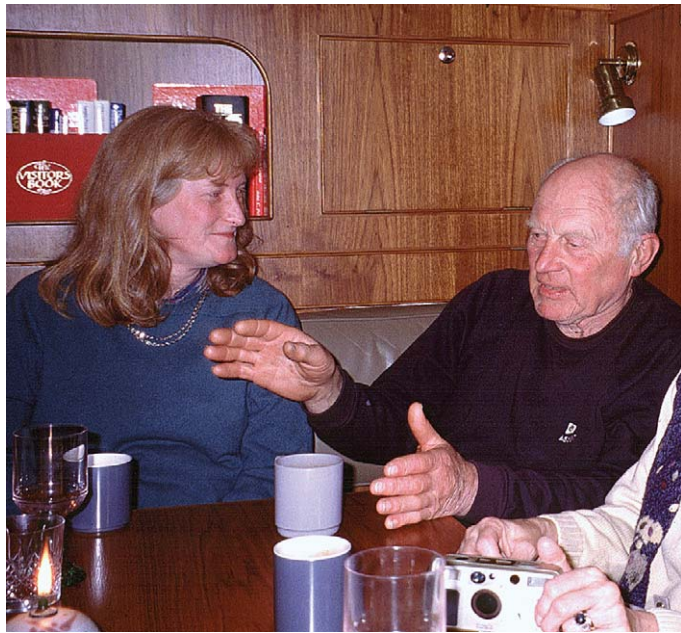


Major William Wemyss (Willy) Ker

When I passed on news of the death of a friend to the Commodore of the Royal Cruising Club his comment was, 'Another of the greats has gone'. Willy Ker in a quiet and understated way was just that, so understated that newer members may not have heard of him though he was well known to those of us of some years' standing, especially to those with an exploratory bent. Though the death of a friend is always a sadness, he died aged 93 so any sadness is tinged with respect and perhaps relief that he passed away quietly after such a long innings.

Willy making a point – or simply describing an Icelandic cod?

Willy was my mentor for Arctic and Antarctic voyages. He was perhaps the first to follow in the wake of Bill Tilman, sailing to remote places to explore, though not to climb. I followed the example of them both and did climb as well, initially briefed and encouraged by Willy. I remember that multi-drawer cabinet in a lobby on his farm, full to the brim with charts of Greenland and Baffin and



Willy and Assent off Sisimiut, West Greenland

*Assent (Willy Ker) and
Dodo's Delight (Bob
Shepton) alongside in
Upernavik, West Greenland*

Iceland along with other places. Of course he lent me some to see me on my way, with his neat pencilled notes dotted around here and there, and always gave sound advice about possible passages, places and ice. His charts are still being lent around amongst those venturing to Greenland and Iceland even today, still with the pencilled comments here and there.

A big difference was that Willy nearly always sailed *singlehanded* across the Atlantic and around Greenland, or up to Iceland, in his Contessa 32 *Assent*, a boat considered quite small even in those days. Only

much later did his wife Veronica insist he have a crew, very often a grandson. I asked him about this one day, "Well, it's easier that way," he said. I think he meant not having to organise and look after crew, but he was always generous if he had anybody else on board and there was always a joke in the background. I remember helping him sail back to Plymouth from Beaulieu one September. Passing Start Point with its tides he asked, "Would you like a gin and tonic?" "Well that would be nice, Willy." It was duly received and enjoyed. Half an hour later, another gin and tonic surreptitiously slipped into the cockpit unasked and unannounced! When we were away on our separate expeditions

our wives would phone each other to commiserate and compare notes on how hopeless their

*Willy and
Bob enjoy a
wee dram
together in
Sisimiut, West
Greenland*



husbands were, leaving them like that. But such was their loyalty that they never actually upbraided us when we returned!

It was his prodigious and meticulous explorations that marked him out, however, and made him so respected. In many ways he opened up the Arctic to yachts, particularly through his pilot book *Faroes, Iceland and Greenland*, better known as *FIG*. He had been educated at Wellington, joined the army and was sent to the 'forgotten war' (his phrase) in India and Burma, became an army surveyor, and led a survey expedition with the army in a remote part of Canada. It was this expertise that he transferred to his pilotage with accurate plotting, bearings and distances. I once got a rocket for submitting a sketch of a possible anchorage in Greenland without a proper chart of the distances involved!

FIG was excellent in itself, both innovative and informative, and has now been incorporated into the equally excellent *Arctic and Northern Waters*, edited by Andrew Wilkes and published by Imray and the RCCPF. It meant we had a basis from which to work when we set out exploring and climbing in remote places. And Willy's Antarctic explorations, still in his *Contessa 32*, showed it was possible to go even there in a small fibreglass boat, in those halcyon days before crippling regulations set in. Of course *Assent* had been the only boat in her class to finish the disastrous Fastnet Race of 1979, though it was his son Alan skippering her on that occasion.

When one of the greats moves on we often feel that it is an end of an era. Willy's passing certainly marks one – an era when we were free to roam the seas and explore remote lands and icecaps without the stringent regulations, often sapping initiative and daring, prevalent today. Some of us mourn the passing of that free era, I mourn the passing of my friend Willy especially.

Reverend Bob Shepton

A version of this obituary first appeared in the October 2019 issue of *Sailing Today*, and is reprinted here with their kind permission.



Peter Morgan

Everyone who knew Peter agreed about the sort of man he was – warm, friendly, calm, kind, encouraging, competitive, with an impish sense of humour yet always a gentleman. He invariably opened doors for people, while his family were aware of details such as never enjoying breakfast without his particular teaspoon for the marmalade and his 'ship's measures' when pouring a drink. Of course, the sea was a major part of his life; a passion inherited from his father and channelled by his studies at Elizabeth College on Guernsey where he trained with the Combined Cadet Force. Growing up by the sea probably helped, of course.

Peter was a man with salt water in his veins, although he preferred to be on the water rather than in it. When he left school in the late 1950s he went to Warsash Maritime Academy (then called the Southampton School of Navigation) to train as a Merchant Navy cadet, before joining the Blue Funnel Line. It was during this time that he met Catherine, and they were married in 1966. Many times she had to persevere



Peter with Harry, his younger grandson, about ten years ago

on sailing trips in apparently ‘calm’ waters, which for him was anything less than gale-force winds.

Befitting someone with briny blood, to say sailing was his hobby is a distinct understatement. From windsurfers, sailing dinghies, catamarans and cruisers to 50ft multi-masted yachts, he took trips on whatever vessel he could get his

hands on, travelling all over the globe, from coral reefs in the Middle East to the hidden coves and creeks around the Cornish coast where he encouraged his crew of friends, nieces, nephews and grandchildren to swim. Following retirement as a Master Mariner, qualified to command any vessel in any part of the world, he enjoyed a successful shore-based career as port operations manager in several international container ports. He later downsized to run a successful sailing school, teaching practical courses aboard his 29ft Westerly Konsort *Saffron of Kernow* as well as evening classes in navigation. Peter joined the OCC in 2006, citing a passage from Falmouth to Madeira aboard *Safeena* made nine years previously. He soon became a valued *Flying Fish* book reviewer, particularly on navigation and other technical subjects.

Peter carried this passion for sailing and navigation, including astro, right into his later life, enjoying holiday cruises and sailing to the Azores long after his family had told him that maybe he should be taking it a bit easier. Some thought their advice fell on deaf ears, but it was probably because he wasn’t wearing his hearing aids.

His competitive nature was always simmering underneath, whether playing badminton in the garden, or football and boules on the beach with his grandchildren. He always tried hard not to show how much he wanted to win, not always successfully. One example was the Grandads’ rowing race at the Durgan Regatta near his home in Cornwall, when he shot off in a completely different direction to everyone else, making the watchers think he’d either gone the wrong way or seriously misjudged the course. We should have known better from a man of the sea – he’d obviously been checking the currents prior to the race and finished far ahead of the field.

Competing in the grandads’ rowing race at Durgan Regatta



*Peter with Sir Robin
Knox-Johnston.
Photo Hugh Hastings*



Peter capitalised on the skills acquired throughout his working life when he became an efficient and highly respected Honorary Secretary of the Royal Cornwall Yacht Club before being elected Commodore in April this year. He was universally liked by RCYC members,

despite showing his mischievous streak now and then – something he had developed on Guernsey terrorising tourist footpaths in his youth.

Family always meant a lot to Peter and he drove many miles to visit his sons in Kent and Scotland, his sister in Norfolk, and family members in Exeter, Preston, Cambridge, Buckinghamshire, as well as many friends ... quite frankly everywhere! He planned trips meticulously with schedules, timings and stop-offs, and was always more than happy to host the family whenever they came down to visit him in Cornwall, giving pocket money to the younger members in his somewhat ‘secret’ handshakes.

By the time of his sudden death at the age of 78 he had managed to live what seemed like two lifetimes’ worth of adventures in his time with us.

Andrew Morgan

My memories of Peter

I had known Peter for years as we strode across the marina car park both bent on important business, but our real friendship started when he began attending the West Country Meets, enjoying the dinner and the raft-up even more. I joined his astro navigation class for an update and found him tolerant and sympathetic towards my chemo brain-induced schoolboy mistakes! Sue and I joined Peter and Louise at the Henley and Bristol AGMs, during which we saw the 2018 Horta Rally developing, and in 2017 he joined *Tyrian* in Brittany for a week’s shakedown cruise. This went well, and we decided that it would be both fun and practical to take a young crew aided by the Club’s Youth Sponsorship programme. That winter we considered the applications, before enrolling an apprentice from Pendennis Shipyard for the passage down to the Azores and one of Peter’s Sea Cadets for the return. Both had been students of his.

In the run up to departure he assisted with the correction of small survey defects and together we stored up (he made marmalade for the voyage). Bread-making on passage wasn’t allowed to interrupt his one-to-one daily astro nav tuition. We were forced to motor much of the way to Horta due to lack of wind, but were joined on arrival by

Louise and Sue and the week's partying made up for it. Then we all enjoyed a ten-day cruise of the central islands before departing for the return motor!

Earlier this year Peter, by then Commodore, welcomed Sir Robin Knox-Johnston to the Royal Cornwall Yacht Club, using the same steps that Sir Robin had climbed following his completion of the Golden Globe Race 50 years ago. Having waved the Azores and Back Race yachts off on 1st June, the fleet were returning when he collapsed. He had so much more to give both his sailing clubs and we hoped to share future voyages in *Tyrian*. A fine sailor and ideal shipmate.

Peter Flutter



John G Bailey

John was born in Ghent, Belgium on 9th October 1952 and passed away peacefully on 31st May 2019.

He was an experienced and resilient businessman who worked as an international executive across Europe, Scandinavia, the Middle East and India. Two posts he particularly enjoyed were as Managing Director / General Manager of Qanbar Ready Mix, a concrete company in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Head of Business Expansion RMX (India) with the Holcim Group. Prior to these appointments he had established his own company, Bailey Rawlinson Materials, later holding a number of Executive Directorships with various English aggregate companies.

John began sailing as a child in Norfolk under the watchful eye of Frank Dye, who sailed a Wayfarer to Iceland and Norway on two separate occasions. As a youth he raced Fireballs and was involved with the Icarus sailing speed trials. For over forty years John and I sailed a range of yachts, in addition, for fourteen years spending Spring Bank Holiday week in May sailing a vintage Wayfarer (No 303) with friends in similar-aged boats in the Solent. We always completed the week with a non-stop 60 mile circumnavigation of the Isle of Wight armed with a flask of coffee, a few sandwiches, two suits of sails and no outboard engine, just relying on the tides to assist our passage. It was interesting sailing through the Needles and across the adjacent overfalls and, lasting for up to twelve hours, a real test for both dinghy and crew. They were fun times, experiencing all points of sail and weather conditions as the little boat plugged her way around the island.

Crossing the Atlantic aboard Gilly B in the 2008 ARC



Avista racing in the Little Britain Challenge Cup

A modest but very accomplished sailor, John was passionate about all his yachts, which were always in immaculate working order. His last, *Avista*, a Nautor Swan 411 built in 1977, was his pride and joy. Over the course of twenty years John spent many hours restoring her and transforming

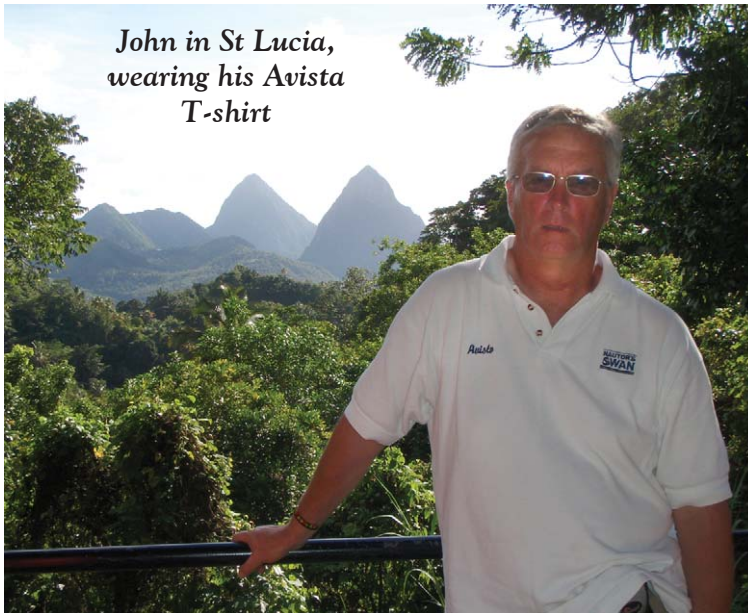
her for short-handed sailing, but always mindful that she was a classic yacht. He often sailed her with friends, but also undertook many singlehanded trips. See the YouTube recording he made with Dick Durham of *Yachting Monthly* some years ago – YouTube Swan 411 *Avista* – if you'd like to know more.

John was a member of many clubs, including the Royal Thames YC, the Royal Bombay



YC, Harwich Ports YC and of course the OCC. He was also a past International Chairman of the Sparkman & Stephens Association. On a number of occasions he had the pleasure of being in the company of the late Olin J Stephens II, an Honorary Life Member of the S&S Association. He much enjoyed the opportunity to discuss yacht design with such a great designer.

John in St Lucia, wearing his Avista T-shirt



John inspired so many young sailors who still speak fondly about their trips aboard his various yachts. Sadly, his untimely death cheated them of more and John of his ambition to take *Avista* on a world cruise. Time and tide go by, but love always stays.

Helen Bailey

