

OBITUARIES & APPRECIATIONS

Michael (Mike) Pocock, Commodore 1998-2002

Mike's brother-in-law Peter Barton remembers: It must have been 60 years ago that I first met Mike. We were both racing 12ft National dinghies at the Royal Lymington Yacht Club and my twin sister Pat crewed for me. I can't remember whether it was my moving to Finns that prompted Pat to look for another helmsman, or whether losing my very able crew to Mike precipitated my decision to go singlehanded. Either way, my loss was their gain and they were soon married.

Pat Pocock adds: When Mike and I married in 1960 we quite naturally spent our wedding present money on a 21ft cruising boat, which took us on many adventures in the English Channel and into the Bay of Biscay.

Peter continues: Their first keel boat, which they completed in the garden, was a cold-moulded Folkboat, *Whisper*, with a secondhand mainsail. They sailed this little boat, with neither engine nor guardwires, through the Chenal du Four to the islands of the Bay of Biscay with their children Richard and Jenny aboard – probably not something that the OCC would recommend these days! Though, as Pat adds, it was in *Whisper* that both their children learned to really enjoy sailing.

Mike had trained as a terrestrial architect, but it was not long before he was showing his artistic flair by painting the sea and boats, and then designing them.

Pat again: In 1967, when my father Humphrey Barton fell ill in the West Indies, Mike flew out and sailed *Rose Rambler* safely back to Lymington. Later that year we formed our own bareboat charter business with a Rustler 31, a Twister and a Westerly Centaur, and then Mike went into sales with two of the Ohlson designs and the Hironnelle catamarans. He raced two of the Ohlson 35s, competing in the Fastnet in *Cavalcade* in 1973 and winning the RORC Class 4 championship in *Flashlight* the following year.

The first yacht Mike designed was the 35ft Starlight, built in Jersey. Altogether he owned three different Starlights over the years and raced them hard, winning the RORC Class V championship. During this time he joined Laurent Giles as a partner for two years before becoming an independent yacht designer and surveyor.

Mike competed in the 1981 Two-handed Transatlantic Race in the 38ft *Blackjack* which he had designed for Rodney Barton (no relation), and which he bought from him two years later. In 1985 we cruised to Iceland to cover the 1000 miles required to qualify for that year's Round Britain and Ireland Race, which was followed by the Two-handed Transatlantic Race in 1986. Long distance cruising now became our aim, and in 1987 we left the UK to sail around the world. We took the standard route, except for a diversion to Alaska and a winter at home to design the unusual water-ballasted *QII* for Mary Falk, OCC.



Mary Falk tells us: I was lucky enough to have a boat designed by Mike – and this wasn't just any boat, it was the brilliant *QII*. The design stage was tremendously exciting. I was living and working in London, and Mike and Pat, with their renowned hospitality, had me to stay each weekend. Mike would show me the work he had done on *QII*'s design in the previous week, and we would talk through all the options. He designed *QII* and her every detail expressly for me. After she had been launched, someone said that her only fault was that the chart table light was on the wrong side. I was able to reply that I am left-handed, hence the design detail!

The plan was to design a boat in which I could win the 35ft class in OSTAR (the Singlehanded Transatlantic Race). This was a tall order bearing in mind that I am small and, even then, was well into my forties. But Mike achieved it and more. In 1996 *QII* won her class, beat all the monohulls in the class above, all but one of the class above that, and all but two of the 50 footers. She set a new class record which remains unbroken to this day ... and *QII* achieved this with very little input from her then 50 year old skipper!

As a designer Mike was brilliant, meticulous, understanding and enthusiastic, and his designs had the benefit of his own extensive ocean cruising experience.

Pat: By 1994, after a seven-year circumnavigation which had included visits to many Pacific islands, New Zealand, Australia and South Africa, it was time to come home, as Mike was being asked to design more and more long distance yachts, such as *Troubadour* for Stuart Ingram, OCC.

Stuart and Annabelle Ingram: We had met Mike Pocock once, but I had read his book *Inshore ~ Offshore*, sought out details of the boats that he designed, and followed his and Pat's travels in *Blackjack* in the Pacific. I thought that someone who had designed boats as diverse as *Blackjack* and *QII* and was now doing the kind of cruising that we aspired to, must have ideas that would give us more than just another stock design. We began a

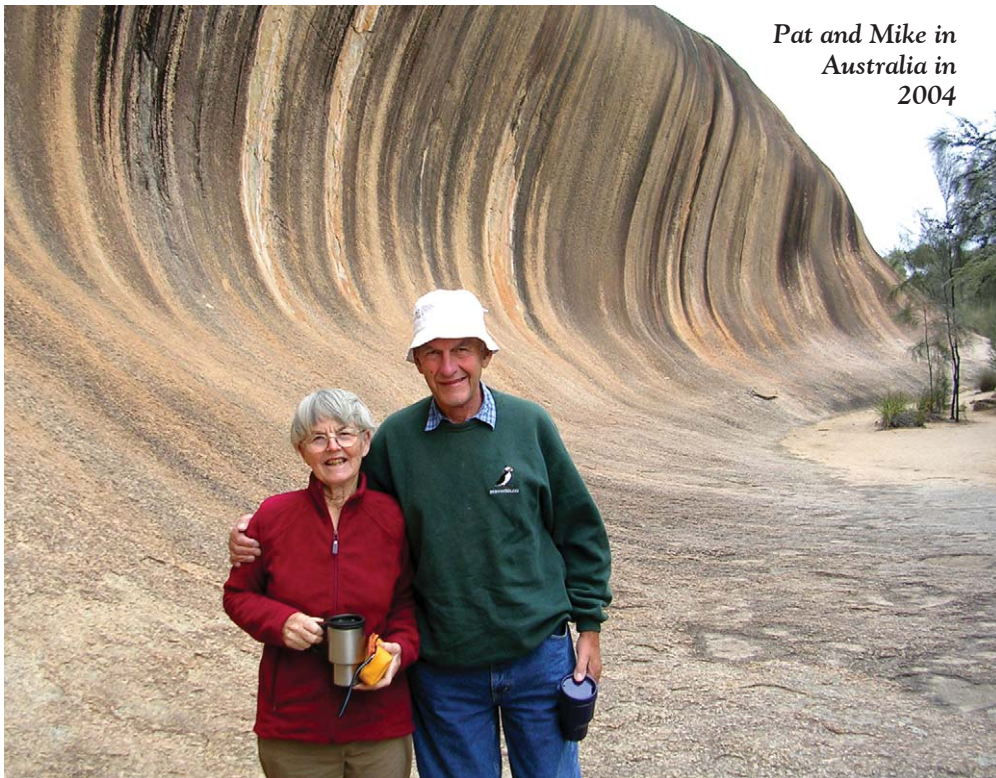
protracted correspondence whilst he was cruising on the east coast of Australia: sometimes *Blackjack* was in a remote area and I heard nothing, at others I came down in the morning to find half a roll of fax paper full of ideas and drawings covering the floor.

By the time Mike and Pat reached home we had agreed to go ahead, and at the beginning of April 1996 construction began with Steve Etheridge as builder, Mike Atkin as project manager and Mike Pocock the designer carefully watching everything, and visiting pretty much daily at crucial times. We had absolute confidence in the team, and as promised *Troubadour* was launched exactly one year after the contract had been signed.

Throughout our extensive cruising in *Troubadour* we have always thanked our lucky stars, both when things have been good and especially when they have been bad, that we have had a boat designed by Mike Pocock. He was a man of total integrity, enormous knowledge and experience, and disarming humility.

Past Commodore John Franklin: I quickly realised that Mike Pocock was not only a talented yacht designer but a very special man. At the time, I had little ocean experience but I thought I knew it all: I had very fixed ideas about what I wanted in terms of design and equipment. As we worked together on the design of my new boat in 1999/2000, Mike very carefully and patiently re-formed many of my ideas based on his own extensive ocean experience, but he did it in a mildly persuasive way that didn't destroy my confidence and I ended up thinking that the changes had been my ideas!

Mike's draughtsmanship was superb – all hand drawn, no computer drafting, notes



*Pat and Mike in
Australia in
2004*

beautifully hand-lettered. In awe I watched him work, his drafting table filled with all the traditional splines and lead weights as he painstakingly explained waterlines, buttocks, tables of offsets, ballasting and stability calculations. By the time *Al Shaheen* was launched in May 2001 (by Pat), Mike had become a friend. I had by now joined the OCC, without any pressure from Mike, but he exuded such enthusiasm for the Club that it just seemed the right thing to do.

Mike was an exceptional craftsman. He crafted a beautiful half-model of *Al Shaheen* for me, commissioned by Jenny as a birthday present, and spent many hours lovingly making models yachts for his grandchildren. He was a man of many parts; designer, builder and craftsman, but above all he was a very human person – patient, considerate, understanding, always composed when angry, who rarely uttered a bad word about anyone. It was a pleasure and an honour to have known him, and to have worked with him.

Mary Falk: I was tasked with the job of persuading Mike to take on the role of Commodore in 1998. It was a difficult task with someone as modest as Mike who kept insisting that he wasn't up to it! But he then came up with the idea of the Commodore's Millennium Cruise and it was that idea which, luckily for the Club, finally persuaded him. The Cruise was an enormous success, drawing in many new members. Not only was it thoroughly enjoyed by all who took part; it brought together Club members from distant parts in a way that had never been achieved before.

Peter Barton: Mike and Pat's Millenium Cruise to the West Indies and eastern seaboard of the USA saw them visit every possible Port Officer along the way. It was the longest rally undertaken by any Commodore!

Pat adds: *Blackjack* was sold in 2002 and Mike started work designing the 27ft *Twilight*. He built her, with some help, and we launched on 6 August 2003 just in time to sail down to the Falmouth meet. For ten years *Twilight* took us cruising in French and Irish waters, before being sold to Michael Murphy OCC a few years ago.

Memories of Mike abound – from **Gus and Helen Wilson** who met Mike and Pat in Falmouth after making their first landfall in the UK in 2008; **Rona House** who learnt the value of taking and passing on photos of other boats from Mike in Tonga; **Jill Vasey** who remembers *Blackjack* sailing in fortuitously to celebrate Hum and Mary Barton's wedding anniversary in Grenada in 1989; **João Carlos Fraga** of Horta who wrote to Pat that: "I keep very good memories of the occasions we met and the days you spent in Horta in *Blackjack*".

Finally back to Peter Barton: Mike will always be remembered for the yachts that he designed. He had no formal training in yacht design, but his creations will be sailing the seven seas for many years to come. It is sad that so many yachts being built today are unattractive. I would have been proud to own any of Mike's designs because they were such good-looking boats. We still admire yachts that are fifty or even a hundred years old, and in years to come people will say, "Yes, that's a Mike Pocock design – isn't she a pretty boat".

Mary Jennifer Guinness Booth

Born in Dublin in 1937, Jennifer was the daughter of Colonel JB Hollwey, a well-known Dublin Bay sailor. She took charge of her own vessel at an early age, when her father gave her a sailing dinghy with a bright red sail, which she navigated within certain limits around Dublin Bay. The only crisis she encountered was when joined by a school of dolphins playing around the tiny craft.

When she married another sailor, John Guinness, she moved across the Bay to Howth, where their three children, Ian, Gillian and Tania, were born. John came from the banking branch of the Guinness family. At one time Commodore of Howth Yacht Club, he was later Commodore of the Irish Cruising Club. If you ever received in the post a copy of the ICC sailing directions, Jennifer most likely put it in the post, as she was Publications Officer for many years.

John and Jennifer cruised together to many places, initially in a Folkboat, *Sharavogue*, in which they sailed around Ireland and as far north as Stornaway, a rare feat in those days. They later purchased a McGruer 43, *Sule Skerry*, on which they cruised from the Azores in the south to Norway in the north. That was followed by a Hood 50, *Deerhound*, in which they again cruised to many destinations including North Cape in Norway, the Mediterranean and the Azores yet again – she cited the 1981 passage from Howth to the Azores as her qualifying voyage. Jennifer was not only in charge of provisioning but was involved in all aspects of life at sea. She had a ‘fly on a wall’ ability on deck, was able to navigate using modern technology as well as instinct, and at the same time produce hot food to maintain her crew’s morale in exacting conditions.

Jennifer joined Clayton Love’s Swan 44 *Assiduous* as a crewmember on the 1973 Irish Admiral’s Cup Team, which included the Fastnet Race. After this she was able to organise further cruises around racing her Dragon, *Ragnor*, which she jointly owned with Peter Mullins. She was the first lady to win a race at the Edinburgh Cup, in Torbay in 1977. After the Dragon she joined forces with Tim Goodbody in the J24 Class, and at the helm won numerous National and Regional Championships. They were also the highest placed Irish J24 at the 1984 World Championships in Poole.

In 1986 Jennifer was kidnapped by masked gunmen and held to ransom for eight days, but fortunately she was rescued unharmed. Her bravery and fortitude during and after the event were a measure of the lady. Ten days after her release she joined Robin Knox-Johnston in the 60ft catamaran *British Airways*, which duly set a new record for the circumnavigation of Ireland. In 1990 Jennifer joined Peter Bunting in his Halberg Rassy 44 *Gulkarna* on the first ARC Round the World Cruise, which she thoroughly enjoyed.

Following John’s death in 1988, Jennifer purchased a Rob Humphrey’s Sovereign 400, *Alakush*, replaced in 2004 by a Sabre 426, which she owned jointly with her second husband, Alex Booth. They cruised and raced extensively from Finland in the east to Spain in the south, and most places in between. Jennifer’s racing relationship with Clayton Love was renewed when he restored the classic Fife 30ft Cork One Design, *Jap*. They had a very successful series of regattas in St Tropez in 2004 and 2006, taking the silverware from some of the larger classics. In 2005 they raced *Jap* on the Clyde in the regatta to celebrate three generations of Fife design and building.

Jennifer took up skiing again somewhat later in life to accompany her new husband. On the advice of a friend she took on a private instructor, as the friend understood that



a relationship cannot withstand the resulting tensions. One morning in St Anton when Alex was asked to join the pair, the group stopped at the top of an ultra-steep part of the Kandahar Downhill race track – a frozen waterfall called the Ice Fall. The instructor just said ‘COME’ to Jennifer as he went over the edge. Alex has never, in the 25 years before or since, seen anyone else do this. In fact it is normally fenced off. A definition of attitude!

A few years ago Jennifer suffered a serious accident while skiing when a snow-boarder, out of control, ran into her at speed while she was standing talking to a friend. Recovery was slow and difficult, but she continued to sail over modest distances. Throughout all this Jennifer never lost her zest or love for sailing. She died on 23 January 2016, aged 78, following a long battle with cancer.

Jennifer was also a member of the Howth Yacht Club, Royal Irish Yacht Club, Royal vSt George Yacht Club, Irish Cruising Club, Royal Cruising Club, Clyde Cruising Club and the Cruising Club of America.

Fortitude, bravery and ability only begin to describe this remarkable lady.

Alex Booth, the Guinness family, and John Bourke, RRC Ireland



Denise St Aubyn Hubbard

Denise died on 22 January 2016 at the age of 91. Olympic diver 1948, Bletchley Park translator, Royal Naval Auxiliary Service skipper 1978-89 and yachtswoman, Denise completed the Carlsberg Singlehanded Transatlantic Race in 1988.

Brought up in Egypt in the 1920s and 30s, Denise became a champion swimmer and diver during her teens, breaking many records. Her family returned to England in 1938 and she was chosen to represent Great Britain in the 100 metre freestyle against France,

Denmark and Germany just before the outbreak of World War Two. After returning to Britain from Abadan in 1943 with a working knowledge of Arabic and Persian, she was interviewed by the Foreign Office and, after an intensive six-month course in Japanese, was seconded to Bletchley Park to work in the Naval Section as a translator breaking Japanese naval codes. After the war she married and had two children, Geraldine in 1946 and Hugh in 1950. She resumed her diving career, and in 1948 was selected to represent Britain in the 10 metre high board diving at the London Olympics. She was lying fifth when a torn shoulder muscle upset her performance. Nevertheless, she was later chosen for the England v. Denmark match and came second.

In 1955 the family moved to Bosham in West Sussex, and as her swimming and diving days were passing, Denise was fortunate to find a new interest in sailing, both inshore and offshore, with her lifelong friend and companion Andrew Reid. Between 1964 and 1967 they sailed his 15ft clinker built, half-decked sloop *Pintail* round mainland Britain in several stages, laying her up in Dale, Oban and Rhu during the winters. Denise attended courses to gain Board of Trade certificates in navigation and seamanship, enabling her to take professional jobs as skipper and navigator delivering craft in coastal waters. At Emsworth Yacht Harbour she learned the practical basics of running a business – accountancy, fuelling and buying stores. In 1970 she began teaching navigation at evening classes, and in 1971 was elected a member of the Royal Institute of Navigation. Two years later she started to teach RYA courses for Competent Crew, Coastal Skipper, Yachtmaster Offshore, and Yachtmaster Ocean shore-based certificates. Professional yacht crews from all over the world began to enrol. She later became an examiner for Yachtmaster candidates.

Keen to develop her seamanship and navigation skills, in 1970 Denise joined the Royal Naval Auxiliary Service (RNXS), the only service at that time to accept women for seagoing duties, and subsequently passed out as Mate. Based initially in





the Portsmouth and later the Littlehampton units, aboard the converted Inshore Minesweeper *Portisham*, she participated in exercises with the RNR and training passages around the British Isles and cross-Channel. In 1978 by passing the Skipper's course of the RNXS, she became qualified to command their ships – inshore minesweepers, fleet tenders and fast patrol boats. For eight years until 1986, Denise was the only woman to take command of a ship in Her Majesty's service.

In 1982 Andrew Reid bought a Beneteau 42ft sloop, *Flying Light*, which Denise agreed to charter for her sea school courses. Always up for a challenge, when someone suggested the Singlehanded Transatlantic Race, her eyes lit up. *Flying Light* was duly modified and a singlehanded return passage from Gibraltar, preceded by a two-hander on the outward leg, qualified her for entry in the 1988 race, which started from Plymouth on 5 June. The voyage tested her and showed just how resourceful she could be – first the self-steering broke, then the back-up autohelm, then the generator, then the satellite navigation, then the log and then, just as she was approaching Nantucket with its dangerous shoals, the Loran radio-location network placed her well to the north of her actual position (it would have been better had it not been working at all). She had to rely entirely on her seamanship and navigation skills with the sextant and chronometer to establish her position. Eventually, on 9 July after 34 days at sea, she arrived safely and cheerfully at Newport, Rhode Island to finish 71st out of 95 starters. At 64 she was oldest woman ever to complete the race – the 3376 mile passage qualified her for membership of the OCC.

In 1993 Denise chronicled her life in her book *In at the Deep End*. Above the water, through the water, below the water, on the water, in the water – Denise's life had been dominated from an early age by the 'wet stuff'.

Dr Hugh V St Aubyn Hubbard

Kenneth (Ken) Saylor

Lt Col (USAF ret) Kenneth Saylor passed away in San Antonio, Texas on 10 November 2015 at the age of 88. Born and raised in land-locked Montana, he joined the Merchant Marine in 1944 and was in Okinawa when World War Two ended. It was during this time that he got his first taste of sailing, in a lifeboat, and was hooked for life. He returned to the University of Montana, where he earned a degree in Business Administration, but was called up during the Korean War and decided to follow an Air Force career as an intelligence officer. He met Penny Plummer in Mexico City at this time, leading to more than 62 years of marriage. He was trained in Russian and Arabic, and also earned a masters degree in International Relations at the American University in Washington, DC. He and his family were fortunate to live in Tripoli, Libya; Iraklion, Crete and Naples, Italy; and Ken also served in Trabzon, Turkey, where he was the base commander. During US assignments the family always lived by the Chesapeake Bay. Ken was medically retired in 1970 and told, among other things, to sell his boat if he wanted to live. Instead, he gradually worked up to bigger boats.

Ken and Penny had bought a 28ft cruising/racing sailboat while they lived in Crete, and later moved the boat to Naples. While living stateside, Ken had the opportunity to crew on various races including Annapolis to Newport, Newport-Bermuda and SORC. After his retirement and settling in Severna Park, Maryland, sailing and cruising became a way of life for the Saylor family. They cruised extensively on the Chesapeake Bay, and Ken participated in additional ocean races and passages. He owned a variety of different sailboats, including a 24ft centreboard sloop, a 28ft cruising/racing sloop in the Med, a 34ft double-ended steel cutter, a Columbia 36, and an Allied/Wright 40ft ketch. His final boat was the Whitby 42 *Barefoot*.

In 1979, after their daughter Kim graduated from college, Ken and Penny headed off for a lengthy cruise to Mexico, Belize, Honduras and Guatemala. For the next 24 years they spent eight or nine months of the year cruising south to Florida, the Bahamas, Cuba and the Western Caribbean and, occasionally, up to New England. When not sailing in their own boat, they joined friends on boats in different parts of the world.

Ken and Penny both qualified for OCC membership in 1997, with a 1164 miles passage from Puerto Rico north to Beaufort, North Carolina aboard the 45ft *Trumpeter*. Being OCC members was a wonderful way to meet many wonderful people, and in addition to the OCC, Ken served as Commodore of the Sailing Club of the Chesapeake, was a life member of the Annapolis Yacht Club, a member of the Cruising Club of America and the Storm Trysail Club. He held a Coast Guard Masters license and was an amateur radio operator.

Ken was the consummate gentleman and generous with both his time and his knowledge. He was a great shipmate, and was well known for keeping close track of time in the late afternoon – promptly at 1700 Ken was always ready for his scotch and soda! He had a great sense of humour, and the cruising community and the OCC has lost a wonderful person with his passing. In addition to Penny, his wife of 62 years, Ken is survived by his son Kenny and daughter Kim, grandchildren Morgan and Ricky (whom he took great pleasure in teaching to sail in a wooden Penguin and a fibreglass sailing dinghy), and great-grandchildren Noah and Lily. Ken will be greatly missed by his many friends. He made a lasting impression on everyone whose lives he touched.

George Marvin and Penny Saylor

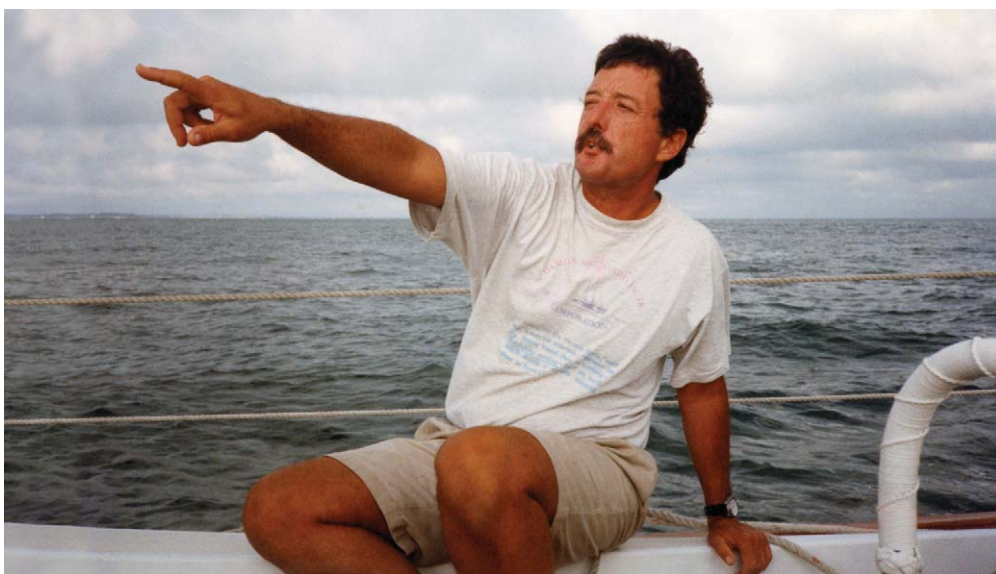
Gary Schwarzman

Gary M Schwarzman of Alameda, California died on 13 January 2016 at the age of 71, after living for two years with a brain tumor. He was predeceased by Beth, his wife of 43 years. Gary's life took him far from his birthplace of Vineland, New Jersey. He earned a BA from Carleton College in Minnesota, where he was active in theatre. After college he moved to San Francisco and started a small software company, pioneering computer-aided dispatching and record-keeping systems for public agencies such as fire departments.

In 1977, Gary and Beth and their two young daughters sailed their boat from San Francisco through the Panama Canal to the East Coast, settling in Falmouth, Massachusetts, in 1981. Besides a dozen whitewater trips through the Grand Canyon, Gary sailed with his family aboard *Bantry Bay*, and later aboard *Anasazi*, to destinations as far flung as Newfoundland, the Shetland and Faeroe islands, Scandinavia, West Africa, Brazil, Haiti and Cuba. Beth and Gary both joined the OCC in 1999, citing their 1985 voyage from Cuttyhunk, Massachusetts, to Flores, Azores aboard *Bantry Bay* as their qualifying passage. In his 1998 book *The Architect's Apprentice*, Gary tells the story of building *Anasazi*, a 43ft cutter and their second cruising boat. The narrative evinces Gary's pragmatism, logical thinking and a healthy individualism.

Gary took great satisfaction in introducing young people to boats and the sea. He volunteered with the Sea Scouts, and started and ran a youth boatbuilding program in East Falmouth. He was instrumental in the creation of the Tall Ship Education Academy, a San Francisco Bay Area non-profit organisation for high school girls, and he was a founding board member for Call of the Sea, which connects urban youth to the Bay and beyond. Working in this capacity for a decade, Gary led sailing expeditions in Baja California, headed up development, and spearheaded a renewed education program. We remember Gary as a free-thinking, clear-sighted adventurer who lived his life intentionally. He leaves his daughters Caitlin and Megan, three grandchildren, Arlo, Alma and Oliver Wilson, and companion Molly Cornell of Falmouth, Massachusetts.

Caitlin Schwarzman



William McNeill Carslaw

Neill was born in Glasgow in 1922, the youngest of a family of five. His father was a surgeon and his mother an artist. When his father retired the family bought a house in Rhu and a clinker-built boat called *Rowan*, and spent many summers on the West Coast of Scotland, where Neill developed his love of sailing. At the age of 17 he joined HMS *Conway*, a training ship for Merchant Navy cadets, after boarding at Merchiston. Following two years' training he was taken on as a cadet on the Patrick Henderson Shipping Line, and in 1941 joined his first ship, the SS *Kindat*, which sailed for Rangoon around the Cape.

Between September and December 1942 he sailed on SS *Daldorch*, which was part of Operation FB on the Arctic Convoys. On one occasion, having left Hvalfjord in Iceland on 3 November, word was received that ships ahead were being attacked, so 27 hours after departure they turned round and headed back to Hvalfjord at full speed. Another cadet aboard SS *Daldorch* was Donald Smith, and in November 2014 both Neill and Donald were awarded the Ushakov Medal by the Russian Federation – reunited after 72 years! (The Ushakov Medal commemorated the 70th anniversary of victory in the Second World War, known at 'the Great Patriotic War' in Russia and some other former Soviet Union countries).

Following the end of the War Neill worked for various shipping companies, spending his last ten years prior to retirement in 1983 with the Fyffes Group as Second Officer and then Chief Officer. After he sailed with friends

retired, and not one for being idle, he on the West Coast of Scotland, built several dinghies, and at the age of 78 crewed across the Atlantic aboard Mark Holbrook's 31ft *Serini* together with Frances Rennie, as recounted by Mark in *Flying Fish* 2000/1 under the title *Scots sail to an English Harbour*. Neill's own account of the voyage appeared in the following issue as *At Sea Once Again*, the 2963 miles from Gran Canaria to Antigua becoming his qualifying passage when he joined the OCC on his return. This was only one crewing position among many, however, and Neill later wrote about his experiences of crewing on a number of other yachts – including passages from Singapore to Malta and Capetown to St Helena – in *Flying Fish* 2003/2.

Neill married Audrey in 1950 and they had five



children. When not at sea he lived in Helensburgh for most of his life, moving into a retirement home for Merchant Navy officers in his late 80s – though at the age of 91 he was still riding his bicycle!

Judy Ross



Dr Richard Gregory Gantt

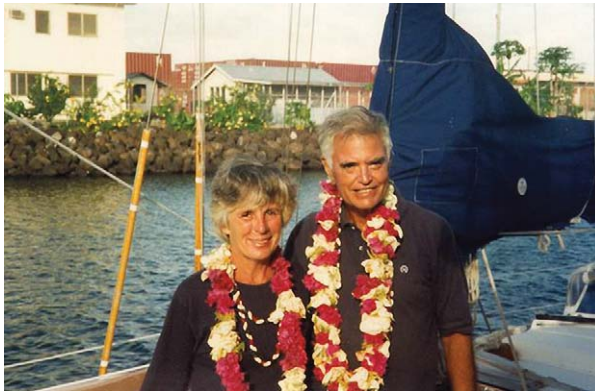
My seafaring cousin Richard passed away on 15 October 2015 at the reasonable age of 85. The first significant voyage in our family was when our joint ancestor, one Thomas Gantt, emigrated from England to Maryland shores around 1660 (clearly a ‘qualifying voyage’). From then, until Richard (and to a lesser extent I) took up serious voyaging, the Gantts were pretty much landlubbers. But Richard set the record straight. His wife Edythe, a true companion, maintains that Richard always had a passion for the sea. He enlisted in the Navy as a path to the Naval Academy where he graduated in 1953. While there, he learned to sail on the Academy’s knock-about and Luders 44 yawls – being highly competitive by nature, he relished the opportunity to race from Annapolis to Newport as watch captain. He earned a Masters from the Illinois Institute of Technology and a PhD in Marine Studies at the University of Delaware. After his career in the Navy (reaching the rank of Lieutenant Commander), he became a patent associate at the Dupont Experimental Station.

All that is interesting, but Richard and Edythe’s enormous sailing achievement was a 75,000 mile voyage in their Bermuda 40 yawl *Celerity*, begun in 1993, which included more than 800 anchorages in 54 countries and territories. Their 2050 mile passage from Easter Island to Nuku Hiva in the Marquesas in 1995 served as his qualifying passage.

Edythe was not ‘born’ to the sea. Her first extended time on a sailing boat was on their honeymoon in the Virgin Islands, when she became violently seasick and was clearly not enthralled by the movement or angle of heel. Nevertheless, she says that, “Knowing that I had married a man who had a lust for the sea, I knew that sailing was in my future. I was curious about what lay around the next corner and I did not plan to be left behind. We had a life ahead of us. We just wanted to see things. We were curious what was out there”.

Richard was supremely confident in his skills and meticulous with his planning. Before any cruise, he spent countless hours studying and correcting charts and publications before laying out courses and distances. With his naval skills and training, he never hesitated to enter an unfamiliar port at night, often to Edythe’s dismay. His comment on entering Cartagena after sunset under dead-reckoning was, “Well, if Drake could do it, so can I”. Following an engine and main compass failure, this stalwart couple sailed from Antigua to Bermuda using only a sextant and hand-bearing compass. Creature comforts on *Celerity* were basic – she had no refrigeration, for example.

After seven years of cruising the Atlantic, the couple discussed a circumnavigation. Their initial goals were at variance. Richard tended to want to do a non-stop or one with minimal pauses, Edythe wanted to see many of the interesting places en route, and pause from time to time to visit their large extended family back home.



***Richard and Edythe aboard
Celerity in Western Samoa, 1995***

As often happens, compromises were reached. After the Caribbean and Panama Canal transit, and stopping at the Galapagos and Easter Islands, they headed west via the normal route visiting many of the anchorages used earlier by William Bligh and James Cook.

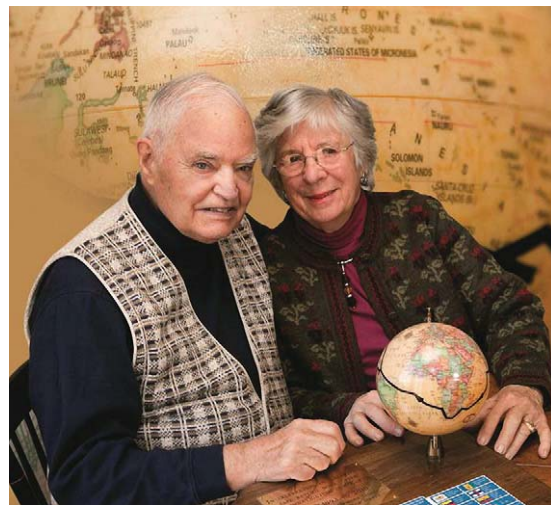
Five years were spent in New Zealand and exploring about 90% of Australian area waters. Richard used the trip as an experimental platform, field-testing remote-sensing applications from his doctoral work at the University of Delaware.

As the trip progressed, Richard developed significant heart problems which sapped his energy, leading to increased pauses and changed sailing routines. To reduce physical exertion, from Bali onwards *Celerity* was sailed under jib and jigger (mizen), the mainsail remaining furled. "Well, we could still make 5 knots, so what's the difference?" said Edythe. In Thailand the engine required significant repair, and mechanical work and visits back to the States extended their stay to half a year. Finally, in Singapore, Richard suffered cardiac arrest and spent ten days in an intensive care unit. Following initial recovery, a short visit to the States stretched to six months. There was clearly an issue as to whether *Celerity* would complete her voyage.

From then on, the couple's determination and resolve ruled. In Malaysia the engine required major mechanical work causing another stressful delay. Departing Thailand, *Celerity's* course was laid to the Cape of Good Hope, where Richard again spent time in an ICU tending to his ailing heart. "But we had to get the boat back home," says Edythe, and on they went. *Celerity* finally sailed through the Virginia Capes in 2010, 17 years after her departure.

Richard was an active member of the Chesapeake Bay Bermuda 40 Association, the Cruising Club of America, the Ocean Cruising Club and the Sailing Club of the Chesapeake. He and Edythe exemplified old-time attitudes toward sailing the world's oceans – their voyages demonstrated skill, determination and practicality, wrapped up in Richard's particular passion for the sea. He and Slocum would have had a lot to talk about. I am proud to claim him as 'Cousin'.

Andrew H Gantt II



***Richard and Edythe Gantt. Courtesy
Ambre Alexander and the
University of Delaware Messenger***