



For Immediate Release

Contact:
Daria Blackwell
OCC Press Officer

+353 87 954 2514
PR@oceancruisingclub.org

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**Updated 16-02-16 to add Graham and Avril Johnson to OCC Award of Merit Winners.**

## **The OCC Announces Award Recipients for 2015**

**Dartmouth, Devon, UK** – Each year, the Ocean Cruising Club (OCC) recognises the outstanding achievements of blue water sailors and brings those achievements to the attention of the sailing community at large. This year's winners represent a diverse group of sailors scattered around the earth's oceans. They were selected from a rich pool of candidates, indicating that many adventurous sailors continue to tackle new frontiers. Jenny Crickmore-Thompson, Chairman of the OCC Awards Sub-Committee which was composed of accomplished members representing multiple continents, made the announcement after ratification by the OCC Committee.

The recipient of the OCC's premiere award for members, the **Barton Cup**, for 2015 is **Michael Johnson, s/v *Gitana***, for his successful two-year transit of the Northwest Passage. Sailing from Chesapeake Bay, VA to Nome, AK, this passage took place in a period that was particularly challenging due to ice conditions when many vessels attempting the Passage turned back. Michael is a prior recipient of the Barton Cup (1990) for his engineless E-W rounding of Cape Horn in 85 days.

The **OCC Award of Merit**, an award that may recognise either members or non-members, is shared among multiple members and the OCC Port Officer Representative who contributed exceptional efforts to assist the people of Vanuatu after the devastation caused by Cyclone Pam. The recipients are:

- Martin & Elizabeth Bevan on *Caduceus*
- Brian Wallace & Sue Dracott on *Darramy*
- Tom Partridge & Susie Plume on *Adina*
- Jonathan & Donna Robinson on *Chez Nous*
- Dennis & Sherry Day on *Trillium*
- Graham & Avril Johnson on *Dream Away*
- Sam & Jess Bell PORs Vanuatu

**The OCC Award** goes to Tom & Vicky Jackson s/v *Sunstone* for their many cruising and racing achievements, amounting to 34 years and almost 200,000 NM, aboard their 40' Sparkman &

Stephens designed, almost 50-year old sloop. They were recognized in 2007 with the OCC Barton Cup for their 80,000 mile circumnavigation, which included rounding of the five great capes. They have also just been named as recipients of the Cruising Club of America's Blue Water Medal.

**The Vasey Vase** goes to Australian doctor John Vallentine, *s/v Tainui*, for a series of interesting and challenging voyages over a ten year period during which he devoted half of each year providing medical services to remote Aboriginal outstations in the western Australian deserts and the other half sailing mostly to cold climates and rugged isolated locations. In 2013, *Tainui* became the second foreign yacht to voyage from the White Sea through Russia and Ukraine to the Black Sea; John and his present crew, Maxine, have written a guide book to these waters being published in 2016.

**The OCC Seamanship Award** recognises Bob and Mona Jankowski, *s/v Continuum*, for the heroic rescue of Randy and Dawn Ortiz from *s/v Nirvana Now* taking on water in the Pacific. They motored more than 40 hours into strong wind and rough seas standing two-hour watches to enable radio contact with the stricken vessel. The situation was critical when Continuum arrived on scene, but a safe transfer was achieved via dinghy thanks to the seamanship of the crew.

Commodore John Franklin issued his personal congratulations to each of the winners and the impressive number of nominees. "This year posed a particularly difficult challenge for our judges who had to read through volumes of high quality submissions and reach consensus on individual selections," he said.

Jenny Crickmore-Thompson added, "Not only were the choices difficult, reaching the winners proved challenging as so many of them are underway right now crossing oceans in remote regions of the world. Such is the nature of our global cruising community. We offer our congratulations to all."

Additional award recipients announced include:

**Geoff Pack Memorial Trophy** – Behan Gifford *s/v Totem*

**Jester Medal** – Rory McDougall *s/v Cooking Fat*

**Rose Medal** – Chris Cromey & Suzanne Hills *s/v Whanake*

**Rambler Medal** – Peter McCrea & Doug Theobolds *s/v Panacea*

**Water Music Trophy** – Mike Reynolds *s/v Zen Again*

**Qualifiers Mug** – Debi Dennis & Jack Markin *s/v Iroquois*

**Port Officer Medal** – (2) Oliver SoLanas Heinrichs (Fuerteventura), Donal McClement (Crosshaven)

**David Wallis Trophy** – Bill McLaren *s/v Vagrant of Clyde*

In addition, two regional awards recognised members in Australia and North America respectively:

**Australian Trophy** - Mark Morwood & Marta Portoles

**Vertue Award** – Sid & Rebecca Shaw

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Additional information about all the winners will be posted on the [OCC website](http://www.oceancruisingclub.org). Some high resolution images are available by contacting PR@oceancruisingclub.org. Unfortunately, this year not all award winners have been able to submit photos because of their remote locations. The stories and images will be posted as they become available.

About the Ocean Cruising Club



The Ocean Cruising Club exists to encourage long-distance sailing in small boats. A Full Member of the OCC must have completed a qualifying voyage of a non-stop port-to-port ocean passage, where the distance between the two ports is not less than 1,000 nautical miles as measured by the shortest practical Great Circle route, as skipper or member of the crew in a vessel of not more than 70ft (21.36 m) LOA; associate members are committed to the achievement of that goal. This standard distinguishes the OCC from all other sailing clubs. It's not about what you are or who you know, but simply what you have done that matters. Our membership as a whole has more experience offshore than any other sailing organisation – in the number of circumnavigators, in the range of extraordinary voyages members have completed, and in the number of solo sailors, and female sailors among our ranks. This is what sets us apart from other organisations, even as it draws us together as a group. We bring the spirit of seafaring to our association by always being willing to assist any fellow sailor we meet, either afloat or ashore.

With a central office in the UK, though it has no physical clubhouse, the OCC is, in a way, the “home port” for all of us who have sailed long distances across big oceans. With 48 nationalities and Port Officers in as many countries, we have a more diverse membership and a more international reach than any other sailing organisation. Our Port Officers and Regional Rear Commodores represent the frontline interaction with our existing members and the recruitment of new members.

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