



OCEAN CRUISING CLUB™

For Immediate Release

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## **The OCC Announces Award Recipients for 2016**

**Dartmouth, Devon, UK** – Each year, the Ocean Cruising Club (OCC) recognises the outstanding achievements of blue water sailors and brings them to the attention of the sailing community.

Commodore Anne Hammick noted, ““With the continued growth in long-distance cruising, including many circumnavigations and high-latitude passages, it is increasingly rare for a single voyage to stand out. Our members do not cruise in order to win awards – they do so for the love of sailing, adventure and the sea. Even so, the OCC is delighted to recognise outstanding achievement among our members and the wider sailing community.”

Jenny Crickmore-Thompson, Chairman of the OCC Awards Sub-Committee, made the announcement. “It is my distinct pleasure to announce the winners of the OCC Awards for the year 2016. This year the winners include a crew who exhibited a remarkable act of seamanship and bravery as well as those who support blue water cruisers in their endeavours.”

**The OCC Seamanship Award** is presented to **Gavin Reid\***, the skipper and the crew of **Mission Performance** during the 2015-2016 Clipper Round the World Race, for responding to a distress call, standing by under difficult conditions, and swimming to M3, climbing the mast and freeing a crew member who had been trapped at the top for 9 hours.

In January 2016, Gavin Reid from Cambridge, UK, was crewing aboard *Mission Performance* on the sixth (Hobart to the Whitsundays) leg of the 2015-2016 [Clipper Round the World Race](#), when a distress call was picked up from M3, a yacht returning from the Sydney Hobart Race. M3 had a rope around its propeller, a damaged mainsail and a man stuck up the mast and entangled in halyards. M3's skipper requested assistance to release him.

*Mission Performance* was the nearest yacht to the stricken vessel. Greg Miller\*, *Mission Performance* skipper, responded to the call and closed on M3 but sea conditions made it too dangerous to go alongside without endangering both boats. Miller stood off 150m away upwind.

At daybreak, Gavin Reid, who is profoundly deaf and had almost no sailing experience prior to signing up for the Clipper Race, volunteered to swim over to the other yacht. The crew threw a line to *M3* which Gavin used to reach the stricken yacht. He found four crew largely incapacitated and unable to help the fifth man. Using the one remaining staysail halyard, Gavin was able to hoist himself two-thirds of the way up the 65ft (20m) mast, then climb the rest of the way hand-over-hand on the swaying mast to reach the crewman. He spent two hours untangling the lines to free the man and help lower him down safely.

The Seamanship Award is made "to recognise outstanding feats of personal bravery at sea or exceptional acts of seamanship" and Gavin's and his mates' actions – the manoeuvring, the swim and the mast ascent – reflect these criteria perfectly. See the story and video on [BBC News](#).

**The OCC Award of Merit goes to Victor Wejer\*** for his unselfish and outstanding service, his extensive advice to international Arctic sailors, and his remote support of yachts sailing the Northwest Passage. The OCC Award of Merit is open to members or non-members who have performed some outstanding voyage or achievement.

Canadian Victor Wejer has been instrumental in the success and safety of many transits of the Northwest Passage. Victor has provided free weather, ice and routing advice to many yachts (42 from 2006-2016), including the first to transit by way of Fury and Hecla Strait (2016). He has provided critical information and expertise without any recompense to those who have approached him for advice, as well as cautioning the dreamers and the unwary concerning a dangerous undertaking. He takes an interest in voyagers in the NW Passage. To many, he is a friend as well as an advisor, taking into account crew and vessel strength.

An example of Victor's invaluable advice is quoted from an early communication to an OCC member: "I have gotten many calls from different adventurers wanting to make the NW crossing. For most I strongly advise them to stay away. One has to have the correct mindset. This is not an adventure, it's a dangerous trip for the unprepared. A perfect crossing will have no story to tell at the end. No problems. No issues. No disasters. All ice openings are taken advantage of. As one Arctic explorer used to say 'adventure is a sign of incompetence.'"

Over the years Victor has collected information concerning methods, shelters, anchorages, ice conditions and equipment from voyagers who have succeeded as well as those who have failed in their attempts to sail this unique and often unpredictable passage. Victor has collated various accounts to create a truly valuable body of work which he updates and regularly shares. His [Yacht Routing Guide](#) can be downloaded from the RCCPF website.

**The Geoff Pack Memorial Trophy** recognizes the person (member or non-member) who, by their writing in print or online, has done most to foster and encourage ocean cruising in yachts or other small craft. This year it is awarded to **Sue Richards\* and the Noonsite Team**: Val, Jeremy and Noah. Sue Richards is Editor of the website [www.noonsite.com](http://www.noonsite.com) and over the past two decades has led the development of this site to become the cruising yachtsman's primary source of worldwide cruising information. Noonsite has a wealth of up-to-date information on practically every country of interest to cruising yachtsmen and has become the yachtsman's "first call" in planning routes and passages.

Through their diligence and dedication, Sue and her team enhance the safety, enjoyment and security of the global cruising community.

Noonsite was started by Jimmy Cornell and acquired in 2007 by World Cruising Club. [Read more here.](#)

Additional award recipients, to whom we offer our sincere congratulations, include:

**The OCC Award** – Suzanne Chappell *s/v Suzie Too*  
**The Vasey Vase** – Simon and Sally Currin *s/v Shimshal*  
**Rose Medal** – Franco Ferrero & Kath McNulty *s/v Caramor*  
**Water Music Trophy** – George Curtis *s/v Galliard of Beaulieu*  
**David Wallis Trophy** – Rebecca (Bex) Band  
**Qualifiers Mug** – James Muggoch *s/v Annie of Orford*  
**Port Officer Medal** – (2)  
Nina Kiff *s/v Wetherley* (Opuia, NZ) and  
Agustin Martin *s/v Caballito de Mar IX* (Gran Canaria, Spain)

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

**Australian Trophy** – Bill Hatfield *s/v Katherine Anne*  
**Vertue Award** – Scott & Kitty Kuhner *s/v Tamure*

Nominations are made by OCC members, but suggestions for consideration are welcome from the cruising community at large. A panel of judges comprising accomplished OCC members from several continents made the selections. The final selections were ratified by the General Committee of the Ocean Cruising Club.

Additional information about the winners will be posted on the [OCC website](#) as it becomes available. High resolution images are available by contacting [PR@oceancruisingclub.org](mailto:PR@oceancruisingclub.org). We sincerely thank all the members who submitted nominations.

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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, Regional Rear Commodores and Roving Rear Commodores represent the frontline interaction with our existing members and the recruitment of new members.

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