



OCEAN CRUISING CLUB®

For Immediate Release

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## **OCC Member Mervyn Wheatley Reunited with Captain Wells of the *Queen Mary 2* who rescued him**

**Dartmouth, Devon, UK, 27 April 2018** – Single-handed sailor Mervyn Wheatley was taking part for the fifth time in the Observer Singlehanded Transatlantic Race (OSTAR) to raise funds for The Royal Marines Charity when he encountered hurricane force winds and massive 15m waves in which his boat was capsized. Although it righted itself, it was a shambles, full of water, the steering had failed, all the electrics had ceased and she was taking on water. He had skippered several legs in the Clipper Round the World Race and this would have been his 19<sup>th</sup> Atlantic Crossing. At the age of 73, the immensely experienced skipper with more than 400,000 miles beneath his keel, made the 'traumatic decision' to sink his Formosa 42, *Tamarind*, to prevent a hazard to other ships and to accept the hospitality of the Cunard Ship the *Queen Mary 2*. He was rescued thanks to "excellent seamanship" by a tender from the ship, which had been en route to Halifax, Nova Scotia from Southampton.

The Ocean Cruising Club wished to recognize the exemplary seamanship shown by Captain Wells and his crew, so invited him to their Annual Awards Dinner aboard the SS *Great Britain* where he and Mervyn were reunited for the first time since the *Queen Mary 2* docked in Halifax. Both their wives were among the many who applauded as Mervyn presented Captain Wells with an OCC Special Award in thanks for his timely actions.

Mervyn gave an eloquent and entertaining account of the rescue attempts and how his vessel managed to T-bone the QM2 then scrape along her sides, gouging tracks along the perfect paint until a tender was launched to pluck him from the sea. He then enjoyed the full hospitality of the luxury liner, which he admitted he could get used to.

After he received his award, Captain Wells warned the 135 attendees at the OCC Dinner not to tempt fate in order to obtain similar favour from the Cunard lines. He said it was not worth the risk. He continued to note that Mervyn Wheatley is so experienced that it was a pleasure to come to his

aid. Captain Wells, Master of the *Queen Mary 2* said, "I am honoured to be reunited with Mervyn. He is a highly experienced mariner and was hugely unlucky to have been hit by such a large wave. I was extremely glad we could help get him back to shore safely."

## About the Ocean Cruising Club



Though it has no physical clubhouse, the OCC is the "home port" for those who have sailed long distances across big oceans. With 41 nationalities represented among more than 2500 members, and Port Officers around the world, we have a more diverse membership and a more international reach than any other blue water sailing organisation. Our Board and Committee comprise 7 women and 7 men representing 9 countries in Europe, North American and Australia, reflecting our diverse membership. Our Port Officers, Regional Rear Commodores and Roving Rear Commodores represent the frontline interaction with our current and prospective members around the world.

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 awards seek to bring to light the accomplishments of ordinary people doing extraordinary things on the world's oceans.

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.

Web: [www.oceancruisingclub.org](http://www.oceancruisingclub.org)

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/OceanCruisingClub/>

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