

THE PLATINUM SUPPLEMENT

The Ocean Cruising Club from 2015 until 2024

Researching and writing this Supplement has fallen to me as OCC Archivist and I have done my best to produce an accurate and readable account. In the interests of clarity I have referred to myself in the third person throughout, and to a large extent have worked chronologically. Dividing each year into 'Events and rallies', 'On the water' and 'Board and General Committee (GC) discussions/decisions' may seem somewhat arbitrary, but allows the reader to skip aspects in which they have no interest.

Parts of this account may be of more interest to future members ten, twenty or even thirty years down the line, when a new volume – presumably entitled *The Second Fifty Years* – will be required to follow on from Tony Vasey's highly readable *The First Fifty Years*, available online at www.oceanclub.org/Publications. Bill McLaren's *Diamond Supplement*, printed in *Flying Fish* 2015/1, is downloadable from the same page.

Far more detail of the Club's internal workings will be found in the AGM, Board and GC Minutes of the period, most of which are available to members at www.oceanclub.org/members/documents – a good opportunity for me to express my admiration and thanks to Club Secretary Rachelle Turk for her clear and accurate

Minutes. Every club should be so lucky! Nearly, though not all, the voyages and events mentioned are described in more detail in either the *Flying Fish* archive at www.oceanclub.org/Flying-Fish-Archive or the Newsletter archive at www.oceanclub.org/members/Newsletters.

The Past Decade – an Overview

Our Club has changed a good deal over the past ten years, nearly all for the better. In late 2014 we had 2046 members, 47% based in the UK, 34% in North America and 19% scattered throughout the rest of the world. By the end of 2024 this had grown to 3752 members, with 39% based in the UK, 35% in North America and 26%

Osprey, Bruce McKenzie's Rival 36, going hard to windward



flying fish

2016/1



The Journal of the Ocean Cruising Club

Above and right: Ellen and Seth Leonard's Celeste amid sea ice near Barrow in 2015 and at anchor in the Tuamotus three years later

classed as contractors and receiving small honorariums, while Dick Guckel continued to create and circulate the e-Bulletin – as he had every month since November 2001 – on a purely voluntary basis. Rachelle has since been joined on the payroll by Emily Winter, in 2019, and Romy McIntosh in early 2025.

Outside the 'centre' – the Board, seven GC members and Club Secretary Rachelle Turk – but nevertheless invaluable to a worldwide club such as ours were, in 2015, eight Regional Rear Commodores and ten Roving Rear Commodores. Current numbers are twelve of each. (In all cases couples are counted as a single unit.) We also had 185 Port Officers and

in other countries. While a swelling membership is clearly not everything, an annual growth of more than 8% would be the envy of many clubs.

Admiral Mary Barton was still alive, though no longer taking an active role in the Club. Sadly she passed away on 1st December 2015, days before her 96th birthday. An account of her long and varied life appeared in *Flying Fish* 2016/1. Just weeks before Mary's death we also lost her stepson-in-law Mike Pocock, Commodore from 1998 to 2002.

In early 2015 Club Secretary Rachelle Turk was still finding her feet, having joined us in November 2014 following the sudden death of Richard Anderton after ten years in post. She was the Club's only employee, the editors of *Flying Fish* and the *Newsletter* being



2018/2

The Journal of the Ocean Cruising Club

Port Officer Representatives (non-members who fill the same role) in 57 different countries, numbers which have now grown to nearly 250 in 77 countries.

Then as now the website played a major role in communicating with members, with Press Officer Daria Blackwell doubling as Web Content Editor. While containing much interesting material, the website itself was becoming increasingly creaky and unreliable, as was the membership database. Both dated back to very shortly after the Millennium – the first *Flying Fish* to include the website address was 2001/1 – and had only received incremental updates over the years, not least thanks to Richard Anderton's background in IT and George Curtis's unfailing enthusiasm and energy. In 2014 e-Zine versions of both *Flying Fish* and the *Newsletter* had been made available on the website, an innovation welcomed by the membership and still much used.

John Franklin was due to end his three-year term as Commodore at the AGM in March 2015, and it had been assumed that Vice Commodore Peter Whatley would be elected in his place. With a new boat nearing completion, however, Peter decided to go sailing instead. With no other candidate able to take over at short notice, John had little option but to remain in post for another year.

Following the addition of an online application form the previous year, the 2015 AGM was the first at which 'remote' votes were accepted – previously votes had had to be cast in person, effectively disenfranchising the majority of members. Although described as 'postal votes', completed voting forms could be scanned and returned by e-mail. Some members found this system difficult to use, not least because it required access to a printer and scanner, and from 2016 online voting was introduced, a system which remains broadly unchanged today. Virtual AGM attendance was already under discussion, but it was agreed to defer this until the technology became more reliable.



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*Graham and Avril Johnson's Dream Away
at anchor in Horta near the end of her
circumnavigation*

At the 2015 AGM held in late March the maximum number of Honorary Members was set at ten, with Jon Sanders and Les Powles joining Gerry Wright, João Carlos Fraga, Alfredo Lagos and Sir Robin Knox-Johnston (see the June Newsletter for rationales). In 2021 this was increased to 20, though this has never been allowed to dilute the honour and by the end of 2024 there were still only thirteen Honorary Members. Listed in order of election they were Gerry Wright, Sir Robin Knox-Johnston, John Sanders, Dick Guckel, José Henrique Azevedo, Jeanne Socrates, Bill Hatfield, Jarlath Cunnane, Susanne Huber-Curphey, the Reverend Bob Shepton, Ian Nicolson, Anne Hammick and Kirsten Neuschäfer, with Daria Blackwell and Jesse James elected in 2025. Brief details of each, as well as of deceased Honorary Members, will be found on the website at www.oceancruisingclub.org/Honorary-Members.

In 2015, as now, the Club was in good health financially, unlike many UK clubs which suffered a decrease in membership following the financial crisis of 2008. At the AGM Commodore John Franklin reported that 'the Club continues in a sound financial state', having made a surplus of almost £8000 the previous year and with reserves of just over £180,000. He expressed his thanks to Treasurer Sally Currin. Both the Youth Sponsorship and the Mentoring Schemes were flourishing, the former having received a generous bequest from Desmond Hampton, Vice Commodore from 1982 to 1988, who had died in October of the previous year. Finally, both *Flying Fish* and the *Newsletter* were going from strength to strength under editors Anne Hammick and Colin Jarman, with no shortage of members keen to write for them and Mike Downing completing the publications team as Advertising Manager.

2015

Events and rallies in 2015

The most important events of the OCC year are undoubtedly the AGM and Annual Dinner, which in 2015 took place aboard HQS (now HMS) Wellington on the River Thames (below). The membership having endorsed a change from the



previous Commodore + Vice Commodore + three Rear Commodores structure to the Commodore, two Vice Commodores, two Rear Commodores and a Treasurer that we still have today, these appointments were then filled by John Franklin (Commodore), Tony Gooch and Anne Hammick (Vice Commodores), and Dick Guckel and Peter Paternotte (Rear Commodores) and Sally Currin (Treasurer). In addition to the six Board members, the GC consisted of David Blackburn, Daria Blackwell, Doug Bruce, Jenny Crickmore-Thompson, Simon Currin, Terry O'Brien and Howard Gosling. (Regional and Roving Rear Commodores are listed on the first page of the relevant *Flying Fish*.)

Including the AGM and Annual Dinner more than 1300 people (members and guests) are thought to have attended OCC events and social functions during 2015, the first time a tally had been kept. Particularly outstanding, and described for *Flying Fish* 2015/2 by Tony Fiske, was the Astilleros Lagos Centenary Rally, the 13th 'Bayona rally' organised by Alfredo Lagos, Honorary Member and PO for Vigo, Spain.

Other events, reported in a succession of *Newsletters*, varied from formal dinners to spontaneous 'pot lucks' with fewer than a dozen present. There were also dinners in the Pacific North West (now referred to as West Coast North America), plus the annual Solent Rally (previously known as the Beaulieu Rally) and West Country Meet both in the UK and the Annapolis Fall Dinner and Maine Rally (actually a lunch) in the US.

Elsewhere in the world OCC gatherings took place in Indonesia, Bonaire (southern Caribbean), Bundaberg (Australia), the Maskelyne Islands (Vanuatu, Pacific Ocean), Mauritius (Indian Ocean), San Francisco, the Scheldt (Netherlands), Scotland, Seattle, Southampton, Whangarei (NZ), the Chesapeake Bay, St Lucia (West Indies), Curaçao (southern Caribbean), Richards Bay, Durban and Cape Town (SA), Newport, RI (US), Opua (NZ), Sint Maarten (West Indies) and Sydney – not forgetting the Curaçao to Belize Rally, which attracted 27 boats, and the Down Under Rally from various parts of the Pacific to Newcastle, Australia. OCC members certainly do get around!

On the water in 2015

While the Board and GC were busy behind the scenes, our members were out on the water – as were many of the Board and GC, of course. Among the cruises recorded in *Flying Fish* 2015/2 were Paul and Rachel Chandler's *Three Months in Southern Brazil*, Lynne Gane and Alan Franklin's *Maeva!* about their time in the Pacific, Ron Heyselaar's *Visit to the North Coast of Cuba* and Chris and Fi Jones's *Indian Ocean Crossing*.

Not exactly a cruise, more a relief effort, was the response of multiple OCC yachts in the aftermath of *Cyclone Pam* which devastated the Pacific island of Vanuatu in March 2015. Never have so many shared the OCC Award of Merit – in alphabetical order Sam and Jess Bell, PORs Vanuatu, Martin and Dr Elizabeth Bevan (*Caduceus*),



Helping hands – offloading rice and other aid supplies from Caduceus at Uliveo Island following Cyclone Pam

Dennis and Sherry Day (Trillium), Graham and Avril Johnson (Dream Away), Tom Partridge and Susie Plume (Adina), Jonathan and Donna Robinson (Chez Nous), and Brian Wallace and Sue

Dracott (Darrymy). More details will be found in the Bevans' *Project Vanuatu* in *Flying Fish* 2015/2, in the September 2015 Newsletter and in the Awards section of *Flying Fish* 2016/1.

Many more voyages from the previous year were described in *Flying Fish* 2016/1, including Ellen Massey Leonard's *Voyaging to the Top of America: A Two-Season Cruise to Arctic Alaska*; Debi Dennis and Jack Markin's *From Nova Scotia to Scotland*, for which they were awarded the Qualifier's Mug; Suzanne Hills and Chris Cromey's 5000 Miles in 'The Variables' about their passage from Chile to New



The Rev Bob Shepton and crew aboard Dodo's Delight in Greenland in 2015

Zealand, for which they received the Rose Medal; and the Rev Bob Shepton's *Swan Song? A Tilman expedition: Sail and Climb*, which culminates with bringing his 33ft



Dodo's Delight hove-to in the North Atlantic

Westlerly Discus *Dodo's Delight* home from Greenland to Scotland through a North Atlantic storm.

A highlight of the issue is Vicky and Tom Jackson's *Alone on the Ocean ~ Passage Making*, reflecting on their almost 200,000 miles of cruising aboard Sunstone.

Finally, but not until *Flying Fish 2016/2 came around*, Bob and Elaine Hazell felt

ready to write about their very difficult crossing of the Indian Ocean the previous year which had featured a lightning strike, rudder damage, a bent prop shaft and finally steering failure.

Board and GC discussions/ decisions in 2015

Several innovations were made during 2015. In May it was suggested that the names of OCC circumnavigators should appear on the website, and a short piece outlining the idea appeared in the September Newsletter. By November 225 members were listed, several of whom had been around more than once. Nearly ten years on, the Circumnavigator's Roll – www.oceancruisingclub.org/Circumnavigators – includes 394 names and 467 voyages. In July the Board followed the advice of IT consultant Tony Brighton and commissioned Live Icom, run by OCC member Clive Woodman, to update and improve the membership database and online application process, though not the entire website. And with a growing number of yachts carrying AIS transponders it was agreed to trial what became the OCC Fleet Map – www.oceancruisingclub.org/Fleet-Map – with 64 boats registered by November. This now gives the positions of some 1396 OCC yachts (from a total of 2301) in all parts of the world. The March 2016 Newsletter carried a full-page article about it.

Tom and Vicky Jackson's 40ft S&S-designed Sunstone



In January 2015 Vice Commodore Anne Hammick had informed Commodore John Franklin that she would be willing to stand for election as Commodore in 2016, but could not do so in 2015 due to other commitments. It therefore came as a surprise when, some months later, John asked a previous Board member to stand against her – there had not been an election for Commodore since 1988 when Giles Chichester challenged Mary Barton. The Board questioned whether Anne would be able to carry out her responsibilities as Commodore while also producing two editions of *Flying Fish* each year. She was confident of her ability to handle both positions simultaneously, and the following three years proved her correct.

2016

Events and rallies in 2016

The 2016 AGM and Annual Dinner were held outside London for the first time in many years and extended over the weekend of 1st, 2nd and 3rd April, a format which proved popular and has been followed most years since. The informal dinner on Friday evening attracted 64 members and guests, while 45 members attended the

AGM the following day and considerably more the Annual Dinner that evening. A record 396 votes were cast, mostly in advance, and Anne was elected Commodore by a relatively narrow margin. Also on the Board post-AGM were Tony Gooch (Vice Commodore), Dick Guckel and Peter Paternotte (Rear Commodores) and George Ehlers (Treasurer), with David Blackburn, Daria Blackwell, Doug Bruce, Jenny Crickmore-Thompson, Simon Currin, Paul Furniss and Howard Gosling on the GC.

Three major rallies were held during the year: the *Suzie Too* Rally to the western Caribbean led by Suzanne and David Chappell, which visited Colombia, the San Blas islands, Panama, Honduras and Belize, and for which Suzanne received the 2016 OCC Award; the East Atlantic Rally organised by Terry O'Brien, which departed from A Coruña in northwest Spain and progressed via Porto, Lisbon, Madeira and the Canaries to end in the Cape Verde islands; and the Arctic Rally led by Jan Isaksen and Eli Steffensen, which explored the Norwegian coast from Bergen to the Lofoten Islands.

Anne Hammick, the OCC's first female Commodore since 1994, wearing the Commodore's Brooch

Closer to home, at least for British members, the UK Autumn Lunch, organised for many years by Tony and Jill Vasey, found new hosts with long-term members Eve and



*Members partying at Nordskott on midsummer night
during the 2016 Arctic Rally*

Michael Bonham Cozens. The West Country Meet and Southampton Boat Show dinner continued to prove popular, as did the OCC presence at the Boat Show which netted more than £1000 after expenses, mostly from new joiners. In the USA, the 25th annual Maine Rally and cruise attracted participants from all over the eastern US. Many of the other social events held the previous year were repeated, plus there were gatherings in Dominica, Mexico, Fort Lauderdale FL, Perth (Aus), Harwich (Suffolk, UK), Victoria BC, the Azores, Liverpool (UK) and Tobago.

On the water in 2016

A number of ambitious cruises were recorded in *Flying Fish* 2016/2 with more reported in the year's Newsletters. Two – Owen Hewett's An Azorean Adventure and

Jess Bentley's Cape Town to Cherbourg – were made with financial assistance from the OCC's Youth Sponsorship scheme.



**Youth Sponsorship
recipient Owen
Hewett learning
celestial navigation
from Chris Jones**



Matt Rutherford's Ault works her way towards the face of a glacier in West Greenland

Sailing in higher latitudes were Kath McNulty and partner Franco Ferrero who visited South Georgia: *A Wild Paradise in the Southern Ocean*, for which they received the 2016 Rose Medal (given for the most challenging short-handed voyage); and Simon and Sally Currin sailing *Shimshal* in the Arctic to Iceland and Southeast Greenland, a cruise recognised by the 2016 Vasey Vase (given for a voyage of an unusual or exploratory nature). Both these articles are illustrated with outstanding photographs. In much the same area were Clare Thorpe and James Boyce, who chartered a 'steel ketch big enough to carry 15 people' from her Dutch owners, sailed her from Norway to Southeast Greenland and then back to the Netherlands via Iceland, a voyage described in *The Adventure Continued*. Also visiting Greenland, albeit on the west coast, was Matt Rutherford, winner of the 2012 Jester Medal, who went *Back To Greenland* to carry out various research projects, while Jim Little's *Taking the Northern Line* recounts his voyage from Iceland via southern Greenland to Labrador and Newfoundland.

Cruising in (mainly) warmer climes were Ron Heyselaar and his family, whose cruise *From the Caribbean to Halifax and Back* took them from Puerto Rico to Nova Scotia and back to Norfolk, VA. Further afield, Phil and Norma Heaton described some of the highlights of their seven-year westabout circumnavigation aboard their Ovni 395 *Minnie B* in *Around By Chance*.

Among the 2016 cruises recounted in the following year's *Flying Fish* were Fergus and Katherine Quinlan's *Russian Voyage*, which took them from their home port of Kinvara on Ireland's west coast to St Petersburg and back; Megan Clay's *Hippos to Humpbacks: A North Atlantic Circuit* taking in the west coasts of Iberia and northern Africa, the Caribbean, the US East Coast, Newfoundland and Greenland, for which

she was a deserving winner of the Qualifier's Mug; *Chantey V – Cabo San Lucas to Victoria via Hawaii* by Daragh Nagle and John Duggan, an unusual voyage starting at the southern end of Mexico's Gulf of California, west to the Hawaiian islands and then northeast to British Columbia, Canada. Meanwhile Neil Hegarty and Anne Kenny were heading east in *Shelduck's Cruise From America: Chesapeake To Cork* and Andrew and Janice Fennymore-White were visiting Svalbard, among other places, in their somewhat misleadingly titled *You're Not Sailors, Are You?* for which they were awarded The Vasey Vase. Finally, Thierry Courvoisier's *Cérès Through The Russian Inland Waterways*, which describes their voyage from St Petersburg to Belomorsk, the Solovetsky archipelago and Arkhangelsk, appeared in three parts in *Flying Fish* 2018/1, 2018/2 and 2019/2. The fourth and final instalment, from Arkhangelsk via Nordkinn (the northernmost cape of continental Europe) to Tromsø on Norway's west coast, was published in *Flying Fish* 2020/1.

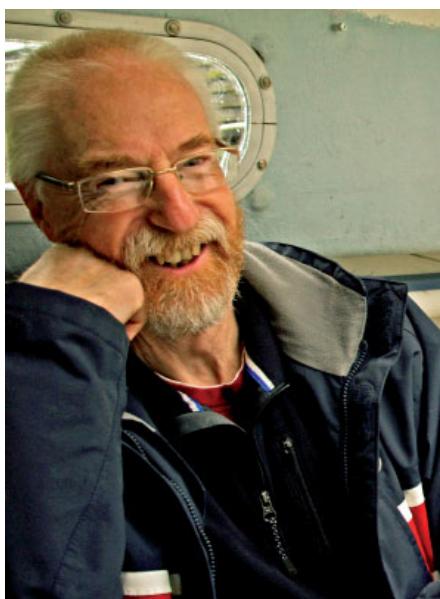
Board and GC discussions/decisions in 2016

One of the first challenges of Anne's time in office was to select a replacement for *Newsletter* Editor Colin Jarman. He had been diagnosed with cancer several years previously but had made it clear that he wished to remain in post as long as possible. In May 2016 he received a terminal diagnosis and informed the Board that they should look for a successor. An e-mail was circulated to the membership outlining what was involved, and though several dozen members responded very few had the necessary editing, photographic and layout skills. After some discussion, Australian member Jeremy Firth was appointed by unanimous decision of the Board. The handover process started immediately and Jeremy proved an excellent choice, becoming fully responsible following Colin's death in November. The latter's obituary will be found in *Flying Fish* 2017/1.

Other matters were also on the Board and GC's minds. There was no doubt that, under Daria Blackwell's editorship, the OCC website had much to do with the 23% growth in membership during John's term as Commodore. With its mix of general and Club-specific news, updated almost daily, frequent visits had become a habit for many members. In addition, George Curtis and Simon Currin spent many hours migrating the Cruising/Pilotage Information database from its separate server onto the Forum area of the website. Since then it has expanded to cover almost the entire globe.

The website itself was showing its age, however. The hosting company had suffered problems over the year, including an outage prior to the AGM,

**Colin Jarman, Newsletter
Editor from 2004 until 2016**



and it was clear an upgrade was overdue. It was also becoming too much for a single volunteer to handle alone, and at the September GC meeting serious thought was given to advertising for a webmaster, either paid or voluntary, to handle the IT side so Daria could concentrate on web content. By September the software had been upgraded and a full redesign was scheduled for later in the year, though this was subsequently put on hold. In December it was agreed that Daria should receive an honorarium, recognising that her role as Web Editor was as important as those of the *Flying Fish* and *Newsletter* editors. Fortunately a surplus for the year of more than £15,000 was anticipated.

Discussions were already under way with José Henrique Azevedo and João Fraga in Horta about OCC participation in the Centenary celebrations of the Café Sport, founded by José's grandfather. A rally was suggested and a formal Rally Policy drawn up, partly to aid organisers of events worldwide and partly to ensure that current safety standards were met, so avoiding litigation in the event of an accident. Other topics under discussion were data security, a more structured framework for Youth Sponsorship applications, and rationalisation of the Club's Awards with more emphasis placed on the three proposed 'key' awards.

2017

Events and rallies in 2017

The AGM on 1st April followed a similar format to that of the previous year, and following voting the Board comprised Anne Hammick (Commodore), Tony Gooch and Peter Paternotte (Vice Commodores), and Daria Blackwell and Simon Currin (Rear Commodores), and George Ehlers (Treasurer). Burgees were presented to the newly-elected Flag Officers and plaques to the five surviving Past Commodores.

L to R: John Franklin (2012/16), Bill McLaren (2009/12), Martin Thomas (2006/09), Anne Hammick (2016/19), Alan Taylor (2002/06) and Tony Vasey (1994–98)



Stepping down from frontline duties (though not from compiling the e-bulletin) was Dick Guckel after an amazing 11 years on the Committee and the Board. Post AGM the GC comprised David Blackburn, Jenny Crickmore-Thompson, Carol Dutton, Paul Furniss, Zdenka Griswold, Fiona Jones and Ted Laurentius.

The Awards were presented in blocks during the Annual Dinner, the last year in which the 'old' awards featured. The Rose Medal, the Rambler Medal and the Geoff Pack Memorial Award were all retired, to be replaced over the years by the OCC Events and Rallies Award (in 2017), the OCC Lifetime Award (in 2018) and most recently the OCC Environment Award (in 2021). These joined the Barton Cup, the OCC Award, the Jester Award (previously the Jester Medal), the OCC Seamanship Award, the Vasey Vase, the Water Music Trophy, the Qualifier's Mug, the Port Officer Service Award, the David Wallis Trophy, the Australian Trophy and the Virtue Award. The criteria for each, together with lists of previous winners and their achievements, will be found at www.oceancruisingclub.org/Awards.

It was noted in Minutes of the December GC meeting that 'The number of social events reported has decreased in 2017 compared to prior years, as have the number of attendees' though it was unclear whether this represented a decrease in events themselves or whether some were simply going under the radar. The year's Newsletters don't entirely bear this out, however, with a highly enjoyable weekend at Caernarfon, Wales in March organised by Fi and Chris Jones; a lunch in Suffolk, UK organised by David Blackburn, also in March; a gathering at Whangarei, NZ in April organised by PO Mary Schempp-Berg; the West of Scotland Open House in May, hosted by Simon and Sally Currin; the annual Chesapeake Bay Cruise in June, led by Lydia and Bill Strickland aboard *Dragon Run* with her unique flying fish spinnaker; the Southern New England cruise in July led by Peter Farkas and Patty Moss; the Solent Rally, also in July, organised by Mary Phypers; an Irish Cruising Club rally in northwest Spain's Rías Baixas, again in July, which attracted many OCC participants; the Maine Rally



Bill and Lydia Strickland's Dragon Run under her eye-catching flying fish spinnaker

and Cruise, and the West Country Meet, the latter organised by Peter Flutter, both in August; the Southampton Boat Show Dinner in September; the South Chesapeake Dinner in October; and finally the Australian Award and Celebration Dinner and Nina Kiff's annual Opua Pot Luck, both in November.

On the water in 2017

There appear to have been fewer outstanding cruises than usual in 2017, though as with social events it may simply have been that fewer were written up. Among those which were recorded were Simon and Sally Currin's *Greenland* 2017, a voyage from Iceland round Cape Farewell (Kap Farvell) to lay their 48ft cutter *Shimshal* up in Aasiaat for the winter, and Chris and Fi Jones's *Around Iceland* 2017, which took them from Wales to Iceland via the Faroes, followed by an anticlockwise Icelandic circumnavigation. In warmer waters, Mike and Helen Norris described their passage from Portugal to the Greek islands in *Our Greek Odyssey*. For some reason the Rev Bob Shepton gave his article about transporting a group of climbers from the west coast of Scotland to the offshore island of St Kilda and back the misleading title *How to Retire Gracefully?* – a real misnomer as five years later he was off to Iceland (again)! On a less happy note, Iain and Meg Buchanan described *Ariadne's Last Voyage* from French Guiana to the Caribbean, and her loss following collision with a submerged object.

Board and GC discussions/decisions in 2017

By early 2017 it was clear that the website situation was becoming untenable and that ongoing work to keep it up and running was a case of throwing good money after bad. Simon Currin was asked to form a Website Development Group to oversee its replacement, with a total spend of around £20,000 + 20% VAT envisaged partially funded by a generous legacy from an American member. OCC member Clive Woodman's company Live Icom, which had updated the membership database and online application process, was asked to undertake the work.

By May work on the new website was well advanced, with Phases 1 and 2 going live on 1st June. It had been designed to function on phones, iPads and tablets in addition to computers, and received praise from the start. The *Flying Fish* archive from 2000 onwards was uploaded to the website for the first time, though it was several years before this was rolled right back to the first, 1964, issue.

A fan of early Flying Fish

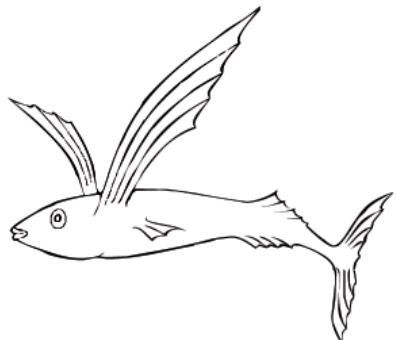


Other matters under discussion by the Board and GC were the Club's insurance cover, particularly for rallies and on-the-water events, and the protection of our Ocean Cruising Club trademark. It is not possible to trademark the words 'Flying Fish', but it was confirmed that we hold the copyright to the stylised drawing, having been gifted it by artist and OCC Founder Member Colin Mudie prior to his death in 2020. The original is held in the OCC Archives.

In late August Treasurer George Ehlers resigned and Vice Commodore Tony Gooch was appointed Interim Treasurer. Past Treasurer Sally Currin prepared the annual financial statements, sharing her workings with Tim Bridgen, the only member to have come forward for election as Treasurer at the 2018 AGM. For the first time a formal Remuneration Committee was set up to oversee the salary of the Club Secretary, as well as the three honoraria, all of which had previously been set by the Board on an ad hoc basis. It was also agreed that, with the Club's finances turning in a surplus year after year, the time had come to expand the provision of complimentary Annual Dinners to members receiving awards, as had long been the case for non-members.

Planning for the 2018 Azores Pursuit Rally was progressing well, headed by Past Commodore John Franklin and his wife Jenny Crickmore-Thompson. Various local companies had offered to host or sponsor events, and by late November 25 boats had signed up plus Alex Blackwell had offered to design a rally flag. Looking further ahead, the pros and cons of holding the AGM and Annual Dinner in the US was discussed, possibly in 2020. Separately, PR Officer Daria Blackwell and her husband Alex offered to update the OCC brochure and following excellent work on their part it was ready for mailing out in December as well as being downloadable from the website.

Following the successful roll-out of the new website on 1st June, in November Simon Currin brought the GC up-to-date on Phase 3. This was to include a tool to create forms for event booking, award nominations, AGM voting etc. It was also suggested that an app should be created allowing membership data, the Fleet Map, selected Cruising/Pilotage Information and possibly Port Officer data to be downloaded so that members could access it while away from wifi, but it was agreed that the idea needed further investigation before going ahead. A long and interesting article about the new website appeared in the June 2017 Newsletter. Membership numbers grew substantially towards the end of the year, doubtless due in part to the automation of the application and payment processes as well as the appeal of the new website as a whole, and regalia sales also increased.



*The original flying fish artwork,
much downsized*

2018

Events and rallies in 2018

The AGM and Annual Dinner took place on 21st April and attracted 133 attendees to the latter – clearly the impressive venue aboard SS Great Britain was a major draw. A full account will be found in the June 2018 Newsletter at www.oceanclub.org/members/Newsletters. Simon Currin was elected Vice Commodore, replacing Tony Gooch, with Jenny Crickmore-Thompson taking over Simon's Rear Commodore role. Tim Bridgen was elected Treasurer. Eoin Robson and Bill Balme joined Carol Dutton, Paul Furniss, Zdenka Griswold, Fiona Jones and Ted Laurentius on the GC. It was agreed that the 2019 AGM and Annual Dinner would be held at Plas Menai in North Wales and that it would revert to a two-day format.

In addition to the various annual Awards presented at the Annual Dinner, a Special Award was presented by Mervyn Wheatley to Captain Christopher Wells, Master of the Cunard liner *Queen Mary 2*, for rescuing Mervyn from the North Atlantic after his *Formosa 42* was damaged by a rogue wave during the 2017 OSTAR and had to be abandoned. Read the full story of *The Loss of Tamarind in Flying Fish 2018/1* at www.oceanclub.org/Flying-Fish-Archive. Another presentation, made for the first time in 2018 was of the OCC Lifetime Cruising Award (now called simply the OCC Lifetime Award). This went to Lin and

Larry Pardey for their 50+ years of engineless ocean cruising and their many inspirational books and DVDs. Equally deserving though in a different way was Dick Guckel, who received the 2018 OCC Award in recognition of his



SS Great Britain in her Bristol dry dock. Photo Kathy Mansfield



Dining in style aboard SS Great Britain

25 years' service to the OCC, primarily for founding the e-Bulletin and editing it for more than two decades. The following year he was elected to Honorary membership, having been an ordinary member since 1987.

The event of the year, at least for many European members, was the Azores Pursuit Rally to Horta on the island of Faial, organised by Past Commodore John Franklin and his wife Jenny Crickmore-Thompson – recently elected a Rear Commodore – for 18th-22nd June. By mid-May some 180 people and 52 boats were signed up, though sadly a flat calm for the preceding few weeks forced a few to quit their boats and fly in instead. Planned to celebrate the centenary of the famous Café Sport, now renamed 'Peter Café Sport', the entire town rose to the occasion. Horta Marina managed to accommodate all the participating boats; the Tourist Office, Mayor's Office and local businesses were more than generous, and at the heart of it all was José Henrique Azevedo, son of the legendary Peter and grandson of Ernesto Avilla Azevedo who opened the

Café Sport just after the end of the First World War.



The Azores Pursuit Rally flag seen against a sea of masts with Pico in the background

The Azores Pursuit Rally proved an excellent opportunity for new members to qualify

Detailed impressions and photos from seven of the participants – including Isao Yamazaki, whose King Bee





Peter Café Sport's handsome centenary 'medal'

is believed to be the first Japanese boat to join an OCC rally – fill the first five pages of the September 2018 Newsletter, while David Burall's *Three Thousand Miles for a Pint!* tells of Kerenza's sail from Guernsey to Faial to take part. Neil Hegarty's *Tam O'Shanter to the Azores in 2018/19* in *Flying Fish* 2020/1 also includes mention of the Rally.

It came as no surprise when the OCC Events and Rallies Award for 2018 went to José Henrique Azevedo, a richly-deserved and very popular win. It was the first of a trio of accolades, as the following year he was elected to Honorary Membership and in 2020 received the Port Officer Service Award on behalf of Peter Café Sport in recognition of the advice, guidance and support given to yachts during the Covid pandemic (see www.oceancruisingclub.org/home/prizewinner/430 for the full citation). José Henrique has been our Port Officer in Horta since 2007, following the death of his father Peter, Port Officer Representative since 1972.

Of course the Azores Pursuit Rally was by no means the only event to take place in 2018. Taken month by month there was the London Boat Show Dinner in January; the Victoria, BC Mid-Winter Party in February; the Solent Rally, Simon and Sally Currin's Scottish Open House weekend and an impromptu lunch in Prickly Bay, Grenada all in May; the Chesapeake Cruise in June; the Southern New England Cruise and a Meet-Up in Rockland, Maine in July; the San Francisco Bay Area Pot Luck Picnic, the Maine Rally and Penobscot Bay Mini-Cruise and the West Country Meet all in August; the Southampton Boat Show Dinner (as well as presence on the MailASail stand at the Show itself) and the British Columbia Rally in September; the South Chesapeake Bay Dinner, the Irish Dinner in Westport, County Mayo, the Scottish Dinner in Rhu, Helensburgh and a pre-Salty Dawg Rally party in Hampton, Virginia ahead of the fleet's departure south, in October; the second *Suzie Too* Rally around the West Caribbean – with so many yachts participating that it had to be split into two fleets to avoid overwhelming the smaller harbours – starting in November; and finally a joint OCC/CCA lunch in Newport, Rhode Island and the Sydney Meet, at which the Australian Trophy was presented to John Valentine, in December. An impressive total, even not including the events which doubtless took place but never made it into print.

On the water in 2018

Perhaps to compensate for the previous year, 2018 produced a wealth of exceptional cruises in addition to the many return passages to the Azores. Appearing in *Flying Fish* 2018/2 was Steve Brown's account of Novara's grounding and refloating inside Antarctica's Deception Island, under the title *High and Dry in Antarctica*. At the

other end of the globe, *Heading South? Go North!* by Jonno Barrett, heads north from Bodø on Norway's west coast to Nordkapp, east into the Barents and White Seas and back through the Russian inland waterways to St Petersburg. In warmer climes Mike and Helen Norris enjoyed exploring the Aegean Sea in *Our Greek Odyssey, Continued*, for which they received the Water Music Trophy. In *Flying Fish* 2019/1 they followed this up with *Cruising the Northern Coast of Greece*. A second sequence, this time by Donald Begg, started in *Flying Fish* 2018/1 with *Lydia* across the Tasman, continued in 2019/1 with *Lydia* across the Indian Ocean and concluded in 2019/2 with *Lydia* round the Cape and across the South Atlantic.

There was hot competition for the 2018 Qualifier's Mug, with James McCaughan's *Vigo To Virginia: Seamogs and the Prudent Mariners* just beating New Zealand to South Africa: my OCC Youth Sponsorship passage



**Two pictures which sum up the OCC – Donald Begg's Bowman 48
Lydia running under twin headsails, and Clive Woodman's Sweden 38
Cosmic Dancer V anchored in Tarr Inlet, Glacier Bay, Alaska**



by Cian Mullee and *Sailing Paradise: Crossing the Caribbean Sea* by Helena Klocke. All three had received assistance from the Youth Sponsorship Programme. Recipient of the OCC Seamanship Award was double amputee Dustin Reynolds, recognised for his outstanding courage and tenacity in departing Hawaii in 2014 with the intention of circumnavigating alone in his 35ft Alberg sloop *Tiama*. By the time of the award he had reached South Africa, more than halfway around the globe.

Also recounted in *Flying Fish* 2019/1, and in addition to overseeing the Club's new website, Clive Woodman found time for a bit of *Chasing Glaciers ~ A cruise through British Columbia and South East Alaska* with partner Angela Lilienthal. Starting in *Flying Fish* 2019/1 and concluding in 2019/2 were parts 1 and 2 of Andy and Sue Warman's *Sailing the Ring of Fire*, following their voyage from the west coast of Malaysia to New Guinea, north to Japan and thence through fog to Attu in the Aleutian Islands. Andy and Sue were deserving winners of the 2018 Vasey Vase. As Roving Rear Commodores, the Warmans often wrote for the *Newsletter* as well as for *Flying Fish*.

Board and GC discussions/decisions in 2018

Event insurance was again under the spotlight. It appeared that the Club was liable for all events run under the OCC name, wherever they took place, whereas our insurance only covered UK events booked via the website. With the Azores Pursuit Rally only months away, a British Columbia Rally planned for September and a second *Suzie Too* Rally starting in November, cover was expanded to include all events worldwide provided they met certain criteria. The following year it was decided that all yachts participating in OCC events and rallies must have third party insurance. With a view to putting internal matters on an equally sound footing, papers were drafted to lay down a formal Code of Conduct, Complaints Procedure and Director Responsibilities, and a Governance Committee was set up.

With the Club recording a surplus year after year it was agreed that, in addition to the Youth Sponsorship Scheme, some financial aid should be made available to those undertaking 'adventurous voyages'. Named The Challenge Grant, the following year it was split into two categories, a Conservation/Environmental Grant and an Adventure Grant. The concept was explained in detail in the December 2019 *Newsletter*, or visit www.oceancruisingclub.org/Challenge-Grant. The Youth Sponsorship Scheme itself remained popular, with three or four grants made most years though matching skippers and recipients sometimes proved difficult. Later that year it was decided that full funding would no longer be made in advance, replaced by 70% made pre-voyage with 30% on receipt of a print or digital report. Finally, and perhaps closer to home, it was unanimously agreed that the annual subscription would be waived for those with 50 years of continuous membership.

In her Commodore's Report to the AGM Anne noted that, as of March, there were 733 members on the OCC's Members Only Facebook Group plus another 51 on the Kid's page, all moderated by Frances Rennie. Also that the OCC Forum, founded and moderated by Simon Currin, continued to thrive allowing for discussion on a

wide range of topics as well (at that time) as hosting the Club's vast Cruising/Pilotage Information archive. Later in the year it was decided that, following approval and occasional redactions, Board and GC Minutes would again be posted on the website, overturning a decision made several years earlier under the previous Commodore.

After many years on an informal basis, reciprocal membership with the Mathews Yacht Club in Hudgins, Virginia, USA and the Royal Cornwall Yacht Club in Falmouth, UK was formalised, and a few months later the Irish Cruising Club and Royal Welsh Yacht Club were added to the list. Now described on the website as 'affiliated' rather than 'reciprocal' and listed at members.oceancruisingclub.org/members/discounts, by late 2024 the list had grown to 11 clubs in five countries.

Also being put on an increasingly formal footing were the Club Archives. Past Commodore Bill McLaren, Club Archivist for the previous six years and author of the *Diamond Supplement* referred to on page 1, wished to stand down and Anne Hammick agreed to take over after the 2019 AGM, when she would cease to be Commodore. Bill had spent many hours sorting through old correspondence and other paperwork and had reduced more than 20 large boxes to five or six, vastly simplifying the handover.

With ever-increasing membership, in early summer it was agreed that the Club should consider employing a second person to assist Rachelle with the growing administration and stand in for her during holidays etc. A job description was drafted, but it was agreed to wait until later in the year to circulate it to the membership. When it finally went out in October there were several dozen applicants, but Emily Winter's familiarity with InDesign, the software program used for creating *Flying Fish*, the *Newsletter* and the *Members Handbook* tipped the balance in her favour.

2019

Events and rallies in 2019

The AGM and Annual Dinner took place on 6th April at Plas Menai in North Wales, preceded by the now standard talks and lectures and followed the next day by a variety of visits and walks to suit all interests and fitness levels – see the June 2019 Newsletter at www.oceancruisingclub.org/members/Newsletters for more details. Simon Currin was elected Commodore, Daria Blackwell and Paul Furniss both became Vice Commodores, and Zdenka Griswold joined Jenny



Newly elected Commodore Simon Currin with José Henrique Azevedo, recipient of the 2018 OCC Events and Rallies Award

Crickmore-Thompson as a Rear Commodore. Baxter Gillespie and Phil Heaton joined Bill Balme, Carol Dutton, Fiona Jones, Eoin Robson and Ted Laurentius on the GC. It was announced that the 2020 AGM and Annual Dinner would be held in Annapolis, Maryland, their first time outside the UK. In addition to online voting, proxy voting would be introduced to comply with the Companies Act 2006. A few weeks after the AGM Tim Bridgen notified the Board that he wished to stand down as Treasurer in July for family reasons. The unpaid post was advertised to the membership, and in June Charles Griffiths came forward and indicated his willingness to stand for election in 2020.

A highlight of the Annual Dinner was the presentation of the 2018 Barton Cup to Australian member and veteran voyager Bill Hatfield for his recently-completed westabout circumnavigation south of the three Great Capes in his Northshore 38 *L'Eau Commotion*. This had taken him from Queensland across the Southern Indian Ocean, past the Cape of Good Hope, north to within 10 miles of the Canaries and south again to round Cape Horn, where *L'Eau Commotion* sustained damage to her rig. After persevering for weeks in the frigid waters of Drake's Passage, steering failure forced him to return to Port Stanley for repairs, finally returning to Australia nearly 14 months after departure. As of 2025 his fascinating blog at www.sailblogs.com/member/leaucommotion/407102/ was still available. We were honoured that Bill had flown from Australia to attend the Annual Dinner and receive his award. The AGM weekend was reported in detail in the June Newsletter.

In addition to the many annual events – the Solent Rally in May, the Chesapeake Cruise in June and Dinner in October, the Southern New England Cruise in July, the Maine Rally and mini-cruise and the West Country Meet in August, the Southampton Boat Show Dinner in September, the Annapolis Fall Dinner and the Irish Dinner

in Crosshaven in October and Nina Kiff's Opua Pot Luck party in November –



Attendees at the Whangarei, NZ farewell barbecue prior to their heading north into the Pacific to avoid the southern winter (see next page)

there were many one-offs. These included a mini-meet in Antigua in January, a West Coast British Columbia gathering in February, and a laying-up lunch in Grenada and farewell barbecue in Whangarei, NZ for voyagers heading north into the Pacific, both in April. In May a Celtic Cruise in Company and another from British Columbia to Alaska, both departed. June saw a Blue Water Weekend at Essex, Connecticut (also open to members of the Seven Seas Sailing Association and Salty Dawg Rally participants) and a lunch in Falmouth, Cornwall at which Lin Pardey was presented with the 2018 Lifetime Cruising Award, with a pot luck dinner at Deltaville, Virginia in July and a Nova Scotia cruise, jointly with the Royal Nova Scotia Yacht Squadron, in July/August. Dwarfing them all was the 5½ month *Suzie Too* Rally, with 64 boats and 134 people of nine different nationalities, which departed from Curaçao at the beginning of November and visited 13 countries. See the June Newsletter for more details.

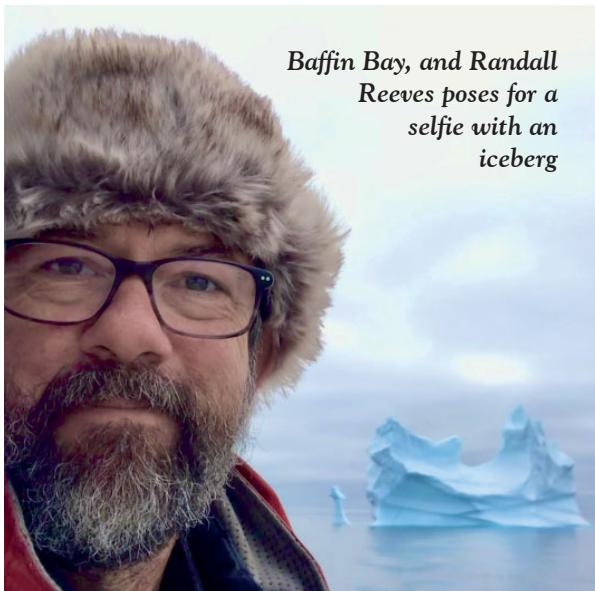
Finally, a photographic competition on the theme of 'At Anchor' attracted dozens of entries of a very high standard, which can still be viewed at www.oceancruisingclub.org/Videos# (not www.oceancruisingclub.org/Galleries, as might be expected).

On the water in 2019

A number of outstanding voyages were completed in 2019, several of them circumnavigations.

The Barton Cup for 2019 went to Randall Reeves for his truly astonishing singlehanded voyage aboard *Mōli*, a 45ft (13.7m) aluminium sloop. His ambition was to complete a 'Figure of Eight' circling both the Southern Ocean and the Americas and an account of part of his 2017/18 attempt appeared in the June 2018 Newsletter. But despite circling Antarctica eastabout, sailing 26,453 miles in 253 days and surviving two disabling knockdowns, he did not achieve his aim. Off again a year later he followed his previous track, this time continuing past Cape Horn for a second time – see *A Second*

Baffin Bay, and Randall Reeves poses for a selfie with an iceberg



*Try at the South in Flying Fish 2020/2 – to sail north up the Atlantic before heading west through the Northwest Passage – see *The Crux of the Matter* in Flying Fish 2021/1. By the time he returned to San Francisco he had covered 39,048 miles and spent*

384 days at sea. In addition to the Barton Cup for 2019, the following year Randall received the Cruising Club of America's prestigious Blue Water Medal.

In *A Solo Non-Stop Circumnavigation around the Southern Ocean's Five Great Capes* in *Flying Fish* 2020/1 Jeanne Socrates reflected on her third singlehanded circumnavigation. Departing from Victoria, BC in October 2018 aboard her Najad 380 *Nereida* she passed south of the Five Great Capes of the title – Cape Horn, the Cape of Good Hope, Cape Leeuwin (Australia), South East Cape (Tasmania) and South West Cape (Stewart Island, NZ) – to return to Victoria in September 2019. She was elected to Honorary Membership in 2020, partially in recognition of this voyage.

A third singlehanded circumnavigation, though far from non-stop, was Dan Stroud's aboard his 48-year-old Rustler 31 *Aisling*, recounted in *Flying Fish* 2020/1 in *An Ocean's Learning Curve*, for which he received the Jester Award. Leaving Plymouth, UK in 2017 he sailed via West Africa, South America, the Beagle Channel, Isla Chiloé, the Marquesas, Hawaii, the Torres Strait, Madagascar, South Africa, the Caribbean and the Azores before returning home. In contrast to the record-setters, Dan's was an ultra low-key, low-tech circumnavigation with few electronics and most of the navigation by sextant.

Another low-key circumnavigator – but for the 11th time! – was Australian Honorary Member Jon Sanders aboard his S&S 34 *Perie Banou*, who at the age of 80 received the Lifetime Cruising Award to add to his CCA Blue Water Medal and many other honours. His sailing résumé is unmatched in the cruising world – in an acceptance speech for one of his many awards he noted that 'I have crossed the Indian Ocean 15 times, the Atlantic 11 times and the Pacific 12 times, cleared the Cape of Good Hope 10 times and Cape Horn five times'. And that was in 2014, before his tenth circumnavigation... See *Flying Fish* 2020/1 to read his full citation. Also circumnavigating largely 'under the radar' was Australian member and veteran voyager Bill Hatfield, winner of the 2018 Barton Cup. Completion of his third singlehanded circumnavigation saw him, at 81, become the oldest man to sail westabout around the world solo, non-stop and unassisted. In 2020 Bill was elected to Honorary Membership.



Randall's joy on being tossed (and catching!) a loaf of freshly-baked bread

Winner of the Vasey Vase was Steve Brown, for his five-year circumnavigation with a variety of crews aboard his purpose-built aerorrigged Bestevaer 60C schooner *Novara*. After leaving Camden, Maine in June 2014 they passed through the Northwest Passage – see *In Search Of Our Northwest Passage* in *Flying Fish* 2015/2 – before continuing south to Cape Horn – see *High and Dry in Antarctica* in *Flying Fish* 2018/2 – returning to Camden just under five years after their departure. In those five years *Novara* had sailed almost 33,000 miles and visited 175 anchorages.

Among the other noteworthy passages made in 2019 and written up for *Flying Fish* 2019/2 were Graham and Avril Johnson's *Malaysia To Madagascar*, another leg of their very leisurely circumnavigation completed the following year, and Helena Klocke's *Crossing the Pacific: Colón to Tahiti*, which continues from where her *Sailing Paradise: Crossing the Caribbean Sea* in the previous issue left off; Kirk R Patterson's account of singlehanding across the Pacific via Hawaii to Hokkaido island, then coast-hopping to Kyushu island at the southern end of the archipelago, appears in *Flying Fish* 2020/1 under the title *Japan, the next Cruising Frontier, Part 1* with *Part 2* following in 2020/2.

**Youth Sponsorship recipient
Helena Klocke swims with a giant
turtle in the Galapagos**



Board and GC discussions/decisions in 2019

After 30 years during which Bungay Printers in Suffolk had met nearly all the Club's printing needs, it was time to review the alternatives, and after site visits it was agreed that Hobbs the Printers Ltd in Southampton would take over from the September Newsletter. Of more obvious relevance to cruising members, the OCC and the RCC Pilotage Foundation had been working towards sharing their Pilotage Information resources on a reciprocal basis for several years, and in February this was finally agreed. Emily joined the same month, initially assisting with general administration before taking over production of the e-Bulletin in May.

Even though membership was growing at a steady 10% annually, PR Officer Daria Blackwell felt there was scope to increase this and created a Marketing Working Group to consider how best to increase awareness of the OCC, attract new members and minimise resignations. Achieving 5% growth over the following 12 months – the height of the Covid pandemic – can be considered an outstanding achievement. The Club's financial reserves were also growing, and it was suggested that we set up a trust to accept legacies and other monetary gifts. Formally named the OCC

Charitable Trust, visit occtrust.org to learn more about it. Another positive was the continued growth of the Port Officer network which, during Jenny Crickmore-Thompson's seven years as PO Co-ordinator, had increased to 237 POs and PORs in 70 countries.

The number of Board Members (six) and GC members (seven) had remained unchanged for some years and Commodore Simon Currin called for suggestions as to how to increase efficiency. The way jobs were allocated had grown organically on an ad hoc basis, often resulting in unclear reporting lines and areas of duplication. The rationale behind the management structure which emerged – including the tripartite Members Global Support Network – is explained in detail in the March 2020 Newsletter. The current version will be found on the website at www.oceancruisingclub.org/members/documents as well as on page 4 of recent Members' Handbooks.

The website remained extremely popular but progress on the OCC App remained slow due to concerns that it could breach UK GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) law. On a more positive note, it was agreed that affiliation should be offered to the Ocean Sailing Club (Sweden), the Bluewater Cruising Association (Victoria, BC) and the Swedish Cruising Club.

2020

Events and rallies in 2020

One might have expected little to have happened during the Covid pandemic of 2020/21 and to some extent this was the case. In early March it was still hoped that the AGM and Annual Dinner on 18th April might go ahead in Annapolis as planned, but by the middle of the month they had been cancelled and replaced by an entirely online AGM, to which 124 full and 13 associate members tuned in. It was chaired at very short notice by Vice Commodore Daria Blackwell, Commodore Simon being in hospital with a fractured wrist following a cycling accident. Charles Griffiths was duly elected Treasurer, with Bill Heaton and Jonathan Lloyd joining Carol Dutton, Phil Heaton, Fiona Jones, Ted Laurentius and Eoin Robson on the GC. With the Annual Dinner also cancelled, how to handle the annual awards had yet to be decided. Simon Currin's Commodore's Report, written a few weeks before the AGM, is available online at www.oceancruisingclub.org/members/documents and, though largely written before Covid struck, makes interesting contemporary reading.

While 2020 saw few 'events' in the usual sense of the word and the planned rallies nearly all had to be cancelled, members who were locked down at anchor, in harbour or ashore found other ways to spend their time. Following the success of 2019's photo competition, an art competition on the theme of The Sea was announced in the June Newsletter. Once again the entries were both varied and impressive and set



'Dolphins Jump for Sunset', winner of the 2020 photo competition

the judges an almost impossible task. The winners were announced in the following issue, and all the entries can be viewed at www.oceancruisingclub.org/Galleries. In December a second photographic competition was announced, this time on the theme of 'Seascapes and Landscapes' with winners announced in March 2021. All entries, together with those in more recent photographic competitions, can be seen at the address above.

Cruisers being resourceful yet overwhelmingly law-abiding, some found ways to meet from time to time while still obeying local Covid regulations. The 17 members aboard eight yachts locked down in a 'bubble' in Whangarei, NZ formed a band, held parties and even celebrated the 4th of July. Later that month, as lockdown restrictions temporarily eased in the UK, local members organised a 'socially-distanced' walk and picnic in Cheshire. In the US a mini-rendezvous was held at Manchester-on-the-Sea, Mass in July and the following month members enjoyed an informal lobster bake on the beach in Cradle Cove, Islesboro, Maine. Many other small, unrecorded gatherings doubtless took place as and when Covid restrictions permitted. The only regular event able to go ahead in the UK was a much-reduced West Country Meet, nine members heading upriver to the Ruan Pontoon on 30th August for an evening party. In contrast, Nina Kiff's annual Opua Pot Luck in November attracted more attendees than it had the previous year!

On the water in 2020

The outstanding passage completed in 2020 – and winner of the Barton Cup – was that of Canadian member Bert ter Hart, who took 267 days to circumnavigate from Victoria, BC via the Five Great Capes aboard his 47ft Seaburban, navigating entirely by traditional means – sextant, tables and a timepiece. Read *Seaburban Around*

Alone in Flying Fish 2020/2 and 2021/1 for the full story.

Bert ter Hart's Seaburban riding out

60+ knot gusts while at anchor in the Falkland Islands



Another notable circumnavigation via the Three Great Capes completed in 2020, but in total contrast to Bert ter Hart's, was that of Croatian member Saša Fegić and his crew aboard *HIR 3* which took 28 months and visited 15 countries, for which he received the Qualifier's Mug. The full story was

told in *My Way around the World* published last year, or turn to *Flying Fish 2021/1* for a briefer account. An even slower circumnavigation also completed in 2020, this time recognised by the Vasey Vase, was made by Graham and Avril Johnson in their 44ft cutter *Dream Away*. After leaving the UK in 2002 they made more than 60 stops over a period of 18 years, chronicling their experiences in twenty beautifully-illustrated *Flying Fish* articles rounded off by *Full Circle* in 2021/1, for which they also won the 2021 David Wallis Trophy.

Winner of the Seamanship Award was Irish member Garry Crothers. Aboard his *Ovni 435 Kind of Blue* in Sint Maarten when Covid struck, his crew were unable to fly out for the passage home so he sailed singlehanded – literally, having lost his left arm some years previously. Part of the OCC Atlantic Crossing Group, he left Sint Maarten in late May and reached Ireland 37 days later.

Not an award winner, though deserving of one, was UK to NZ at 20 in *Flying Fish 2020/2* in which Youth Sponsorship recipient Greg Williams recounts the passage of the title, made on two different yachts. His skipper's Kiwi passport smoothed their entry into New Zealand. *Flying Fish 2021/1* carried *One Step Ahead Of Covid: Cape Verde to Canada in 2020* by Martin Fuller, following on from his *Left or Right at Bardsey Island?* in 2019/2, and also *To Seek, To Find, And Not To Yield: A family Atlantic*

Adventure by Peter Owens and Vera Quinlan – from Ireland to the Cape Verdes accompanied by their two children, a voyage completed by way of French Guiana, the eastern Caribbean and the Azores in the following issue.

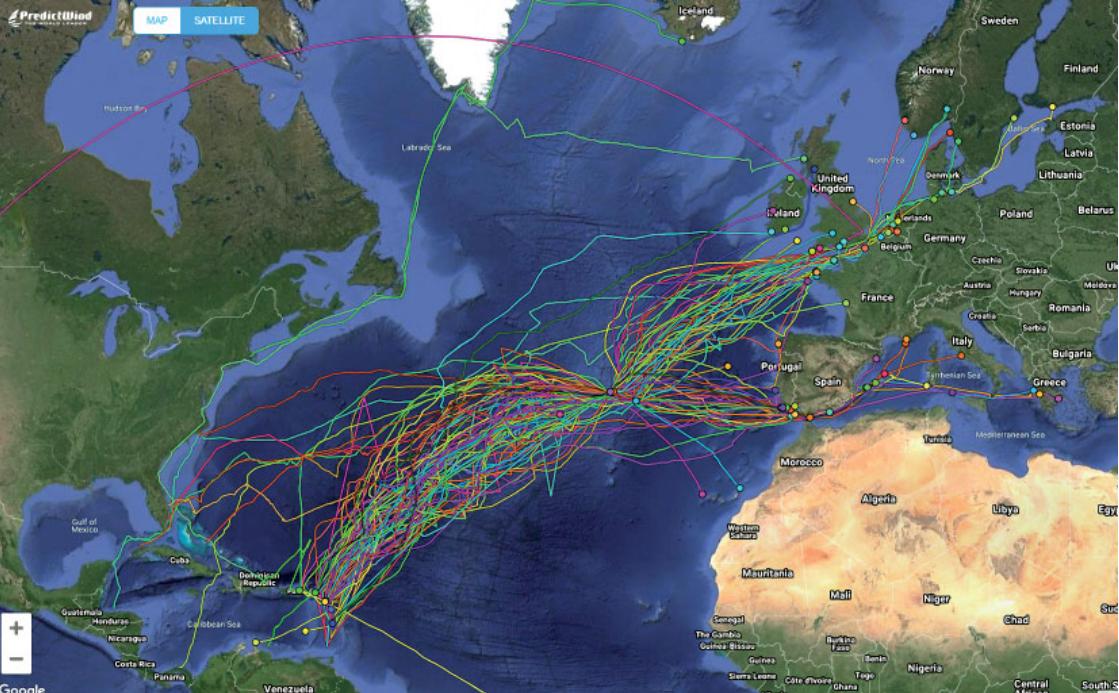
Heading homewards in the Pacific with husband Seth, Ellen Massey Leonard recounted their 2400 mile passage to windward aboard their 40ft cutter *Celeste*, in *Close-hauled to Hawaii in Flying Fish 2023/1*. Yet another long passage, this time described in the December 2020 Newsletter, was that of Roving Rear Commodores Reg and Nicky Barker who decided to sail the 5500 miles from Roatan in the Honduran Bay Islands home to Guernsey aboard their Rustler 42 *Blue Velvet of Sark* without a stop in the Azores. There are many other accounts of longer-than-planned passages to be found in the year's *Newsletters*, as well as descriptions of unscheduled stays in some unlikely, if appealing, places.



Spray on Celeste's dodger (aka sprayhood) on passage from French Polynesia to Hawaii

Board and GC discussions/decisions in 2020

Early in the year a call was put out for volunteers to join the IT Project Team, as well as to oversee Instagram and to assist Daria with PR. The OCC Facebook Group moderated by Frances Rennie continued to grow, reaching almost a thousand members, with smaller OCC Groups for those in the Caribbean and crossing the Atlantic and Pacific. There was occasional misuse of social media however, and, following some questionable behaviour in the run-up to the AGM, new rules were introduced regarding lobbying. These will be found in the Minutes of the 28th April GC meeting. It was stressed that candidates' statements should only appear on the Forum, as should questions to them and their responses, and not overflow onto social media. Further discussion took place later in the year, resulting in the Social Media – OCC Facebook Group's report to the 14th November GC meeting. Both the report and its appendices follow the Minutes of that meeting, available at www.oceancruisingclub.org/members/documents.



The OCC Atlantic Fleet Tracker for the Atlantic Crossing Group.
Courtesy PredictWind

Commodore Simon Currin proposed a series of 'Lockdown Lectures' to be given by prominent members, covering a variety of sailing topics and every part of the globe. These proved extremely popular and more have been added every year since. By September 2025 there had been 62, all of which can be viewed at www.oceancruisingclub.org/webinars. Making them available to non-members has inspired a number of new joiners.

As Covid spread around the globe, Members' Support Network Co-ordinator for the Indo-Pacific, Fi Jones, together with Rear Commodore Jenny Crickmore-Thompson, began working with the authorities in the Pacific and Indian Oceans to persuade ports to open up to yachts which had been at sea for longer than the 14-day quarantine period. Fiji was a case in point, being pressed to open one of its ports for quarantine and re-supply (this was finally achieved in July). In contrast, neither New Zealand nor Australia allowed cruisers owned by non-nationals even to apply for entry until much later in the year, despite the ongoing efforts of Australian member and Roving Rear Commodore Guy Chester, who was heavily involved with the authorities in both countries.

Both the Facebook crossing nets and the Fleet Map were opened to non-members in all the major oceans, and PredictWind provided forecasts for the 120-strong Atlantic Crossing Group. The OCC Award for 2020 went (in alphabetical order) to Moira Bentzel, Alex Blackwell, Daria Blackwell, Guy Chester, Tim Goodyear and

Fi Jones for their outstanding – and very effective – efforts to assist cruising sailors throughout the world caught up in the Covid epidemic, an achievement recognised by the Royal Cruising Club with their Medal for Services to Cruising. Senator David Fawcett's name was added to the list the following year. *Retreat From Paradise* by Vice Commodore Daria Blackwell, in *Flying Fish* 2020/2, describes how the Atlantic crossing support team went about their task, from lobbying governments to providing back-up to yachts at sea, many without a full crew. Her husband Alex, Regional RC Ireland, adds a tailpiece outlining the *Lessons learned from Providing Shore Support during the 2020 west-to-east Atlantic crossing* – a valuable resource should anything similar happen in the future.

Both Port Officer Service Awards also recognised outstanding service during the pandemic. José Henrique Azevedo, Honorary Member and POR for Horta, Faial received his on behalf of Peter Café Sport, founded by his grandfather. During lockdown in the Azores José and his team supported cruisers calling in at Faial in dozens of practical ways, from taking shopping lists to local supermarkets to transporting sick pets to the vet. See page 8 of *Flying Fish* 2021/1 for the full citation. In the Caribbean, Victor Langerwerf, POR for Curaçao, enlisted the media to pressure local politicians to allow a yacht with a five-year-old child aboard to anchor and re-provision until they eventually agreed.

Due in part to the efforts made by the Members' Support Network Co-Ordinators to assist non-members there was a steady stream of joiners over the summer. By September this was averaging 30 each month which, to some extent, balanced the lost recruitment due to cancelled rallies and boat shows. Many

members were involved in contributing to the safety and success of ocean crossings and it was agreed they should receive certificates recognising their input.

José Henrique Azevedo with two of his Covid assistance team outside the Café Sport



New rules were drafted relating to Facebook including that, following the closure of the three 'Ocean Crossing' groups, both the OCC Members Group and the OCC Treasure Chest would revert to being members only. Also that both the autumn Atlantic Crossing Group and the OCC Caribbean Net+ 20/21 Facebook Group would be limited to OCC members and active cruisers.

After five years on the GC and a further two on the Board, Jenny Crickmore-Thompson resigned as Rear Commodore following a disagreement with members of the Board. At much the same time Frances Rennie, Facebook Moderator for the previous eight years, also stood down. Co-incidentally they had shared the 2019 OCC Award, Jenny for organising and managing the worldwide Port Officer network for seven years, and Frances for her untiring work as Facebook Moderator.

That yachts were beginning to move again by November is made clear by the 827 members of the Pacific Crossing Facebook Group, of whom 650 were non-members. By December yachts were able to transit the Panama Canal, but were prevented from clearing out into the Pacific unless there was a suitable destination port that would take them – a major problem, as most islands in the western Pacific were still closed and French Polynesia declared 'full'. Noonsite had become the accepted source for verified port of entry information.

2021

Events and rallies in 2021

The Club's second online AGM was held on 10th April. 162 full members and 21 associates logged in, with others doubtless sharing their screens. Fi Jones was elected Rear Commodore, joining Commodore Simon Currin, Vice Commodores Daria Blackwell and Paul Furniss, Rear Commodore Zdenka Griswold and Treasurer Charles Griffiths on the Board. Guy Chester was elected to the GC, joining Carol Dutton, Bill Heaton, Phil Heaton, Ted Laurentius, Jonathan Lloyd and Eoin Robson, who was re-elected for a second term. A resolution doubling the maximum number of Honorary Members from ten to 20 was passed, after which Jarlath Cunnane was elected. Treasurer Charles Griffiths reported that the Club's finances remained robust despite the difficult year and that subscriptions would remain at their 2010 level. Once again, Simon's long and detailed Commodore's Report, appended to the AGM Minutes, makes illuminating reading – and not just for the OCC App.

Although 2020 will always be thought of as 'the year of Covid' it resurfaced at intervals during 2021, sometimes unexpectedly, causing events to be cancelled at short notice. When they could go ahead it was agreed to make double Covid vaccination a recommendation for attendance though not a requirement.

In Chaguaramas, Trinidad, cruisers from the OCC and the Seven Seas Cruising Association kicked off 2021 by congregating for a pot luck lunch hosted by POR Jesse James, whose wife and daughter contributed some local dishes to the spread.

The following month, and in a different ocean, Jenevora Swann and Fergus Dunipace were able to invite six other cruisers to a ‘sumptuous coconut crab lunch’ aboard *Two Drifters* while anchored at uninhabited Tahanea Atoll in French Polynesia’s Tuamotu Archipelago.

It was May before an advertised OCC event could take place in the UK, in the shape of Simon and Sally Currin’s (almost) annual Scottish Open House weekend at Traighuaine in Scotland. In deference to ongoing Covid restrictions the ‘weekend’ was spread over several days with social distancing observed temporally as well as physically, and most of the nine guests arrived by boat. In July, with Scottish social distancing rules relaxed, they were able to hold a ‘Traighuaine Tea Party’ for eight guests.



All set up for a socially-distanced barbecue at Traighuaine on the west coast of Scotland

In August the annual Maine Rally – one of the many OCC events forced to cancel the previous year

– went ahead very much as usual despite the approach of Hurricane *Henri*, with 85 members gathering for a lunch of lobster rolls and seafood chowder at the Camden Yacht Club. Later that month, and with Covid rules in the UK (temporarily) relaxed, 51 people from 14 boats were able to attend the annual West Country Meet, with a dinner in Falmouth followed by the traditional upriver lunch party on Sunday. On Monday the fleet moved round to the Helford River for another excellent dinner at the Helford River Sailing Club. Colin and John shared the OCC Events & Rallies Award for organising such a memorable weekend.

Equally successful was the Southampton Boat Show Dinner, held at the Royal Southern Yacht Club on the Hamble on 16th September. Forty-seven members and their guests enjoyed a delicious barbecue, cooked outside and accompanied by a great selection of salads, but alas, no after-dinner entertainment! The following month 36 members and guests were able to gather at the Mathews Yacht Club in Virginia, USA for the annual South Chesapeake Bay Dinner, this time feasting on either fried oysters or a ‘North Carolina barbecue’ of pulled pork shoulder in sauce. Most arrived by road, though four yachts made it to the MYC dock.

Nina Kiff’s annual Opua Pot Luck in November, which had been so well attended the

In 2021
the annual
Opua
Pot Luck
barbecue
was
reinvented
as a picnic
in New
Zealand's
Bay of
Islands



previous year, in 2021 fell victim to Covid restrictions and was re-invented as a picnic on Robertson Island in the Bay of Islands. Thirteen members and guests were there to enjoy the sunshine, all of whom had arrived by boat though not always their own.

On the water in 2021

In view of the ongoing threat of further Covid restrictions it is unsurprising that fewer long passages were started in 2021 than in most other years. However three were completed then, and all received recognition from the Club.

Since it was first presented in 1981 there can have been few more deserving of the Barton Cup than double amputee Dustin Reynolds, for his largely solo 7½ year circumnavigation starting and finishing in Kona, Hawaii. He made the first part of the voyage in a 46-year-old Alberg 35 named *Rudis* and completed it in a 1983-built Bristol 35.5 which he named *Tiama*. Neither had the luxury of self-tailing halyard or mainsail reefing winches. The two parts of *Sailing Around the World Alone* will be found in *Flying Fish* 2022/1 and 2022/2 respectively. (See photo on next page.)

Deserving winners of the Vasey Vase, which recognises 'an unusual or exploratory voyage', were Ginger and Peter Niemann for their second, five-year circumnavigation aboard their 50ft ketch *Irene*, for which they also received the Cruising Club of America's prestigious Blue Water Medal. Their route was unusual – from the US East Coast across to the Mediterranean, through the Suez Canal into the Red Sea and on to Singapore, where they lived aboard at the Changi Sailing Club for five months, forbidden to go ashore due to Covid lockdown. In February 2021 they were able to start the long passage home via Japan and the Aleutian Islands, returning to their home port of Seattle in August. Their cruise north through Japan is described in *Flying Fish* 2022/2.

Winner of the Qualifier's Mug for 2021 – though he might equally have received the Seamanship Award – was James Frederick, who left California for Hawaii in June 2020 aboard his 52-year-old Alberg 30 *Triteia* to sail the 2000+ miles to Honolulu, Hawaii. When he was just over halfway the rudder became detached from the rudder post, but calling for rescue and abandoning his vessel seems never to have crossed his mind. Read *1000 Miles Steered by Drogue* in *Flying Fish* 2021/2 to learn how he coped.



*Dustin Reynolds's Rudis
on passage from Port Vila
to Ambrym, Vanuatu. (See
previous page)*

Board and GC discussions/ decisions in 2021

After the pressures and problems of the previous year, to which many leading members of the OCC rose splendidly, it is not surprising the 2021 appears to have been somewhat quieter. Having received professional advice regarding the UK Data Protection Act, by February the OCC App was available to download and was already proving very popular. Its capabilities are described in detail on page 3 of the 2021 Commodore's Report, which follows the AGM Minutes at www.oceancruisingclub.org/members/documents.

During the summer Vice Commodore Paul Furniss decided to step down and in September the

Board took the unusual step of co-opting Phil Heaton, despite his not having stood for election to a Flag Officer position. He agreed to put his name forward at the 2022 AGM. Four Board positions would be available, and even though three were re-elections for second terms it was agreed that this was not ideal and efforts should be made to stagger them in future. Also on the subject of elections, the Operational Management Policy rules regarding election lobbying were re-worded. The 2023 version can be found at members.oceancruisingclub.org/members/documents. There was some concern that while 60-70% of members opened OCC e-mails – not the same as reading them to the end, of course – some 30-40% (about 1400 people) did not. There was considerable discussion as to how best to reach those 'missing members'.



Some OCC members also race! Guy Chester sails his Oceans Tribute in the Caribbean 600. Photo © James Tomlinson Photography

New GC member and active cruiser Guy Chester took over responsibility for lobbying and info-collection in the Indo-Pacific region from Fi Jones. More islands were opening up to cruising yachts, but New Zealand and Australia remained closed to all but their own nationals. As of November there were still log-jams in the Pacific, with more boats than the cyclone-safe locations could accommodate. And while yachts were again being allowed to enter South Africa, many had had to make extended passages across the Indian Ocean as Mauritius and Rodriguez were closed and Réunion was only accepting French-flagged yachts. Assistance to members with other Covid-related problems continued, including lobbying insurance companies and passport and visa authorities to show flexibility to cruisers encountering difficulties due to disrupted or delayed plans.

For the second year running the OCC Award recognised those who had, individually and collectively, supported yachts affected by Covid restrictions the previous year. 'Team South Pacific 2020' comprised Juan Boschetti (POR Colon, Panama), Liz Back, Cynthia Rasch, John and Lyn Martin, John Hembrow (PO Christchurch, NZ), Vicki Moore and Sue Richards of Noonsite.

The OCC Archives went from strength to strength during the year, and were moved from Club Archivist Anne Hammick's office to a secure commercial storage facility near her home in Cornwall. They contain a full record of the Club's history from 1954 to the present day, the earlier records on paper and those since the Millennium both on paper and digitally. The gaps in the collections of *Flying Fish* and the *Newsletter* were largely resolved by generous gifts from John Maddox and Tony Davies, who joined in 1968 and 1979 respectively.

2022

Events and rallies in 2022

The 2022 AGM and Annual Dinner were held in Annapolis, as had been planned for 2020, with 114 full members and five associates attending either virtually or in person. Commodore Simon Currin, Vice Commodore Daria Blackwell and Rear Commodore Zdenka Griswold were elected for second terms and Phil Heaton was elected Vice Commodore. Reg Barker joined Guy Chester, Carol Dutton, Bill Heaton, Ted Laurentius, Jonathan Lloyd and Eoin Robson on the GC. Technical problems prevented Treasurer Charles Griffiths from presenting his report remotely from the UK, so Past Treasurer Sally Currin gave an overview in his stead. The Club continued in very good financial health despite considerable spending on IT improvements, and once again the membership had increased, though by less than in previous years. For more details read the Commodore's Report at www.oceancruisingclub.org/members/documents (this time as a stand alone document rather than following the AGM Minutes) in which Simon mentions that the OCC had been shortlisted for the First Sea Lord's Award for Best Use of Digital Media, doubtless due in large part to Vice Commodore Daria Blackwell's diligence and skill.

In light of so many cancelled plans over the previous two years it is understandable that fewer OCC gatherings than usual took place as the world emerged from under the shadow of Covid. Among those that did, however, was the Solent Rally (previously called the Beaulieu Rally) over the weekend of 22nd-23rd April after a three-year gap. It followed the previous format of dinner on Friday at the Gins Farm clubhouse of the Royal Southampton Yacht Club on the Beaulieu River, attended by 47 members and guests, followed by a quick sail across the Solent to Cowes for a second dinner, this time at the Royal Yacht Squadron and attended by 30 people.

In the US, 21 members and guests attended the Halifax Dinner at the Royal Nova Scotia Yacht Squadron in early May. Among those present were Sally and

Displaying the flag at the 2022 Maine Rally. (See next page)



Commodore Simon Currin, who had just cycled north from Annapolis to relaunch *Shimshal II* after her extended stay in Nova Scotia. The first OCC cruise to resume after Covid was the Southern New England Cruise, which started on 30th June in Newport, RI and finished 12 days later at New Bedford, Mass, taking in the Independence Day celebrations at Bristol en route. This was followed by the Maine Rally and Mini-Cruise, with nearly 100 present for lunch at the Camden Yacht Club on 21st August. The Mini-Cruise, comprising 29 people on 13 boats, set off next day, visiting several anchorages including the evocatively-named Hell's Half Acre before reaching Brooklin, Maine four days later.



Close on the heels of the Maine Rally and Mini-Cruise came the UK's West Country Meet. Again it followed precedent, with 29 enjoying dinner at the Royal Cornwall Yacht Club on Saturday evening, followed by the usual upriver pontoon party on Sunday with ten yachts rafted up. Sadly the final dinner, at the Helford Sailing Club, had to be cancelled due to strong easterly winds, to which the river is wide open.

Fi Jones (now Commodore) and Linda Melton wear OCC colours to the 2022 West Country Meet

The annual Southampton Boat Show Dinner was held on 16th September at a new venue, the Fox and Hounds restaurant near Bursledon on the Hamble River. Despite being near the river it is tucked away down country lanes, testing the navigational skills of those drivers without SatNav or GPS.

Back in the US, mid-October saw 80 members and guests congregate at the Annapolis Yacht Club on the shores of the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland for the annual autumn OCC Annapolis Gathering, just prior to the start of the Annapolis Boat Show.

Shortly afterwards and not far away, the 12th annual Southern Chesapeake Bay Dinner was held at the Mathews Yacht Club at Hudgins, Virginia on 20th October 2022. There were 66 attendees, but sadly no yachts could reach the MYC dock due to problems with the access bridge.

The Irish Dinner on 29th October was held in the Titanic Hotel, Belfast and attended by 29 members from all over Ireland, North and South. Situated opposite the Titanic Belfast Museum, which some guests took the opportunity to tour, the Titanic Hotel was once the Harland & Wolff offices where RMS *Titanic* and her sisterships were designed. The final OCC event of the year, and apparently the only one in the Southern Hemisphere, was the annual Opua Pot Luck dinner in mid-December when, with typical generosity, Nina Kiff, PO for North Island, Bay of Islands hosted 18 people at The Kiffery, her and Tony's home.

On the water in 2022

As might be expected, several of the most outstanding passages of 2022 received Awards. The Club's premier award, the Barton Cup, went to Jon and Megan Schwartz and their sons Ronan (15) and Daxton (13), liveaboard cruisers who over the previous five years had sailed some 35,000 miles aboard their Boreal 47 *Zephyros*, exploring Europe, the Caribbean, South America and Antarctica. As of 2025 their blog at www.svzephyros.com/ was still accessible – and considerably expanded.

Winner of the Qualifier's Mug was Ainur Mutiyeva who, with husband Shaun Weaver, crossed the Pacific non-stop from Panama to Papua New Guinea, a passage of more than 8000 miles, aboard their Gitana 43 *Three Ships*. Ainur comes from landlocked Kazakhstan and this was her first passage of more than 500 miles. The account of their voyage, *Destination PNG*, appeared in *Flying Fish* 2022/2.

The Vasey Vase was awarded to Swedish members Lars and Susanne Hellman for a series of exploratory voyages, often to high latitudes. Since being appointed Roving Rear Commodores in September 2021 they have written multiple articles for the *Newsletter* about their travels aboard *Sea Wind*, a 1979-built Fantasi 37. Their destinations have included Greenland, The Gambia, the Beagle Channel, Antarctica, the Patagonian Channels and most of the west coast of Chile.

Another outstanding voyage was that of Peter Owens's *Danú of Galway* and her crew, who sailed from Ireland to Southeast Greenland by way of Iceland. On arrival they climbed, as well as exploring and then surveying the waters around Milne

Susanne and Lars Hellman's *Sea Wind* in Greenland in 2020





*Lots of activity aboard Peter Owens's *Danú* of Galway at Húsavík in Iceland prior to departure for Southeast Greenland*

Land before returning to Ireland, again via Iceland. It unquestionably justified the OCC Challenge Grant which Peter Owens had received to help cover the trip's expenses. Read *An Irish Sailing/Climbing Expedition To East Greenland* in *Flying Fish 2023/1*.

Winner of the Australian Trophy (for a voyage made by an Australian member which starts or finishes in Australia) was Roving RC and GC member Guy Chester. Having circumnavigated once aboard *Sanctuary*, a Crowther 52 catamaran, he replaced her with a 32-year-old high-performance cedar and balsa trimaran, *Oceans Tribute*, also 52ft LOA. Leaving

singlehanded from New Zealand he visited New Caledonia, Australia, Cocos Keeling, Réunion Island and South Africa before continuing direct to Antigua. For the full story turn to *Bay of Islands, New Zealand to Richards Bay, South Africa* in the December 2022 Newsletter and *How did I get here?* in *Flying Fish 2023/1*.

A quite extraordinary voyage, which won no awards perhaps because she had previously won both the Barton Cup for 2017 and the Seamanship Award for 2019, was that of German singlehander Susanne Huber-Curphey. *Blauwasserbriefs* (Bluewater letters) in *Flying Fish 2022/2* recounts her Atlantic 'figure of eight' aboard her 39ft aluminium cutter *Nehaj*, including a rare pass of the Tristan da Cunha group, although she made no attempt to stop there.

Among the other long passages to be recorded in *Flying Fish 2022/2* are Patrick Marshall's *The Middle Way up the Atlantic*; the second of the Rev Bob Shepton's *Contrasting Passages*; Kurt Harrington's *Capetown to Cutler – The Final Stages of a Covid-Interrupted Circumnavigation* and those of four young people – Abigail Lambert, Hatty Morsley, Bori Hegyi and Emma Whitley – all of whom made their voyages with help from the Youth Sponsorship Programme.

Board and GC discussions/decisions in 2022

Early in the year the OCC was petitioning New Zealand to allow owners access to their stranded boats in time to depart before the end of the season, and by February Australia had opened its air but not its maritime borders. It was agreed also that the

OCC should have formal representation in South Africa in the shape of a Regional Rear Commodore, and Past Commodore John Franklin was invited to be the first incumbent. Following a few instances of skippers giving false information to gain entry into otherwise closed ports it was felt necessary to produce a paper on 'Member Ethics', which also covered environmental matters and consideration for local communities. The sentence "OCC Members are cruisers who comply with international, national and local laws and regulations; respect communities, their customs, the environment and other people including other Members; demonstrate honesty, fairness and courtesy; and are responsible and accountable for their actions." now concludes the Values and Culture at www.oceancruisingclub.org/About-the-OCC.

At the first GC meeting following the AGM, newly-elected GC member Reg Barker was appointed to get the Club's social events – both new and annual – back to pre-pandemic levels and to create enthusiasm for events to celebrate the Club's 70th anniversary in 2024. Alex Blackwell was again asked to design a suitable flag. Having appointed a new RRC for South Africa a similar post was created for New Zealand and the SW Pacific with Viki Moore, PO for Lyttleton on NZ's South Island, the first appointee. The Lifetime Cruising Award was renamed the Lifetime Award to allow a wider range of achievement to be recognised. Finally Phil Heaton drew attention to the Sailors for the Sea Green Boating Guide at sailorsforthesea.org/programs-green-boating-guide/.

In September both Board and GC meetings opened with the Commodore's proposed message to the membership following the passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II. It was sent the following day.

With ever-increasing postage costs and the App's early problems largely overcome, some Board and GC members felt that both the *Newsletter* and the *Members' Handbook* should cease to be available in print, but this was not endorsed. It was agreed, however, that the choice to 'opt out' should be publicised both in e-mails and in the next hard-copy mailing, drawing attention to its environmental as well as financial benefits. Wider publicity to members about the OCC Charitable Trust had already resulted in several generous donations and a £5000 legacy specifically for the Youth Sponsorship Programme had been received.

The OCC presence on MailASail's stand at Southampton Boat Show remained popular, but more as a

Martin Fuller and Stephanie Connor chat to Chris Chaundy at the 2021 Southampton Boat Show



chance to meet other members than for recruitment. It was agreed that both venue and date for the 2023 AGM weekend would be changed from Cumbria in March to Poole in April, followed by Liverpool in 2024 and the US in 2025.

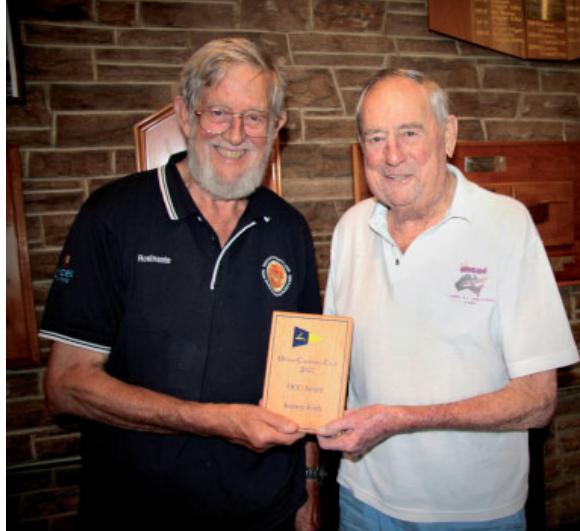
Finally, Newsletter Editor Jeremy Firth had been considering stepping down for several years and made a firm decision to resign following the December issue. Emily Winter was appointed to take over from March 2023.

2023

Events and rallies in 2023

The AGM and Annual Dinner were held on 15th April at the Royal National Lifeboat Institution training college in Poole, with 71 members attending the AGM and 101 members and guests at the Annual Dinner. Fi Jones was elected Vice Commodore alongside Phil Heaton, while Reg Barker joined Zdenka Griswold as a Rear Commodore. Newly elected to the GC were Judith Jacobsen, Barry Kennedy, Agustin Martin, Steve Siguaw and Derrick Thorrington, joining Guy Chester, Joerg Esdorn and Eoin Robson. Also elected, but this time to Honorary Membership, were Founder Member Ian Nicolson and Past Commodore Anne Hammick. Treasurer Charles Griffiths confirmed that Club finances remained sound, but members were warned that a small rise in subscriptions was likely the following year – the first increase for more than a decade – largely to cover ongoing IT costs. There was no dissent. As in previous years, Simon Currin's Commodore's Report touches on many of the changes and innovations made during the previous year. A particular point of interest is the list of new joiners' nationalities – 347 from 24 countries around the globe. Search for 2023 Treasurer's Report at www.oceancruisingclub.org/members/documents.

A major reshuffle of Board and GC personnel at the AGM had been anticipated, introducing some refreshing new talent as well as being a good opportunity to increase GC numbers from seven to a maximum of nine. (The Board effectively 'created' the GC after the Articles were updated in 2012, so has the authority to do this so long as individual GC members are elected by the membership.) It is clear from the February Minutes that all those leaving positions of responsibility were making great efforts to hand over their particular briefs in good order. Among them was Daria Blackwell after five years on the GC followed by another five years on the Board. During that



Jeremy Firth (left), Newsletter Editor from 2016 until 2022, receives his OCC Award from John Solomon, PO for Hobart, Tasmania

Daria Blackwell receives the OCC Award for 2022 from Past Commodore Martin Thomas

time she led on PR, co-chaired the Awards Committee, became Web Editor and, as Rear Commodore, assumed responsibility for the Club's social media presence. She led the team which received the OCC Award for their handling of the Atlantic pandemic response, and in 2023 was a deserving winner of the OCC Award for the second time.

On the evening prior to the AGM a dinner was held at the Poole Yacht Club at which Founder Member Ian Nicolson kept his audience spellbound with tales of racing in Poole Harbour shortly after the Second World War – including having to avoid unexploded ordnance! He demonstrated that even at the age of 95 he still had an enviable memory.



Founder Member Ian Nicolson aboard his Maxi 1000 St Bridget with the 'birthday flag' that his daughter Beth made for his 95th and updates every year!



By 2023, with Covid resurgence no longer a major threat, social events and rallies could again be planned with reasonable confidence. First was the Solent Rally, which took place over the weekend of 28th–30th April and followed the same Beaulieu–

Cowes pattern as in previous years. In the US a few days later, 12 boats left Pensacola near the Florida–Alabama border on 1st May to visit the beautiful St Joseph Bay – Florida's 'Forgotten Coast'.

Further north, and just off the Chesapeake Bay, a three-day 'Spur of the Moment Cruise' saw around 30 people leave the Corrotoman River on 12th June to cross the Rappahannock River to Fishing Bay in Deltaville – not a great distance, but clearly

much enjoyed by the participants. A few days later, and a continent away, seven boats and 13 people gathered for drinks and dinner in Vliho Bay on Levkada, Greece on 13th and 14th June – something of a dry run for the planned celebrations the following year.

Back in the US, the Southern New England Rally took place in early July, followed on the 5th by a 'Pulpit Pop-Up' in Pulpit Harbor, Maine, when 25 boats and more than 50 members and their guests gathered to share food, drink and good conversation. A month later, 56 members with ages ranging from 16 to 104 attended the annual Maine Rally on 20th August, held as always at the Camden Yacht Club. The following weekend saw 24 members and guests congregate in Falmouth, UK for the annual West Country Meet, with the usual dinner followed by an upriver party next day.

Across the world, the Fiji Pre-Regatta Barbecue in Musket Cove on 5th September attracted a good crowd of members and non- (but hopefully future) members. Equally well-attended was the gathering at Victoria, BC on the 14th when over 40 attendees enjoyed a barbecue in the clubhouse of the Royal Victoria Yacht Club. Among those present were ten circumnavigators, including one who had sailed solo and non-stop, four who had traversed the Northwest Passage, and three who had completed (or almost completed) their second time around.

On 20th September 39 members and guests gathered at the Fox & Hounds near Bursledon for the Southampton Boat Show Dinner, though this time with only six circumnavigators present. It proved an excellent opportunity for Rear Commodore Reg Barker to share his plans for the 70th Anniversary celebrations.

On 19th October 30 members gathered at the Mathews Yacht Club at Hudgins, Virginia for the annual Southern Chesapeake Bay Dinner, while on the 31st in Cape

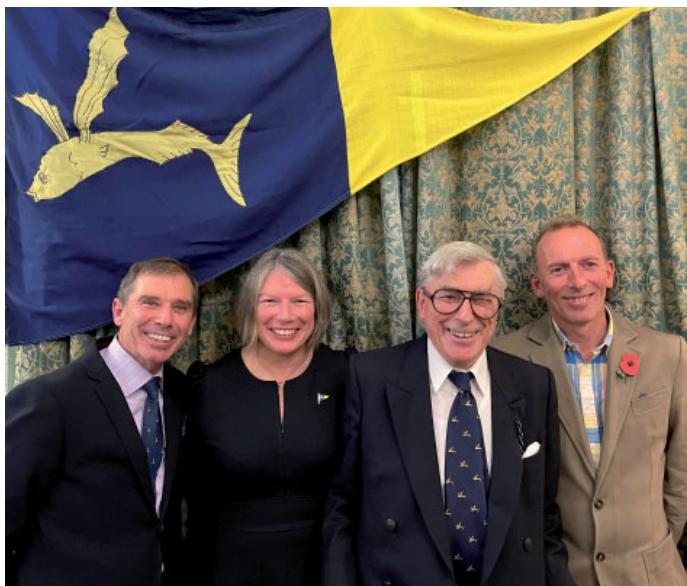
Attendees at the 2023 Victoria Gathering at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club, BC



Rear Commodore Reg Barker outlines plans for the Club's 70th Anniversary at the Southampton Boat Show Dinner

Town, SA 125 people witnessed the presentation of the 2022 OCC Seamanship Award to the staff of MRCC Cape Town by Regional RC John Franklin. Among the audience were fellow awardees Kirsten Neuschäfer and Tapio Lehtinen. (See *Flying Fish* 2023/1 for more details).

Back in the northern hemisphere, the Scottish Dinner held at the Royal Northern and Clyde Yacht Club in Rhu on 4th November celebrated Founder and Honorary Member Ian Nicolson's 95th birthday – exactly three months after the event! Some 58 members and guests enjoyed a delicious meal followed by Ian's amusing speech.



Ian Nicolson (PO for the Clyde since 1959) with son David, daughter Beth and son Richard (PO for Cowes, Isle of Wight, since 2015)

Returning south, 17 members and guests assembled for a barbecue at Pittwater, near Sydney on 12th November, the first OCC social event in Australia for several years. Then on 10th December the final OCC event of 2023

took place across the Tasman Sea, when the annual Opua Pot Luck dinner was held at The Kiffery. Attending, together with 21 others, were Honorary Member Jeanne Socrates and Peter Barton, son of OCC Founder Humphrey Barton.

On the water in 2023

One of the most unusual voyages in OCC history was that of Rob Barton, grandson of the Club's founder, who rowed solo and non-stop from Carnarvon in Western Australia to Tanga in Tanzania, covering the 4470 miles in 86 days to raise money for a mental health charity. For this he received the Barton Cup and also a Guinness World Record. See *Row, Row, Row your Boat* in *Flying Fish* 2023/2.



Rob Barton in what must be the most unlikely vessel ever to have won the Barton Cup!

In contrast Martin Grube and Astrid Clausen-Grube, winners of the Seamanship Award, were a couple in a 37ft yacht making their first Atlantic crossing. Seven days out from the Cape Verde islands *Pincoya* experienced a potentially catastrophic rigging failure, but disaster was averted by Martin who repeatedly climbed the swaying mast to set up reinforcements, which held until they reached Martinique. See *Atlantic Crossing ~ It Could Have Been Easier* in *Flying Fish* 2023/1.

Winner of both the Jester Award and the David Wallis Trophy was Trevor Robertson. Trevor is one of the Club's most experienced sailors, having covered more than 200,000 miles at sea, much of it singlehanded. The awards were made for his 2023 voyage, from Scotland to the Caribbean by way of Iceland, Ireland, Iberia and The Gambia – see *An Atlantic Circuit in Iron Bark, Part 2* in *Flying Fish* 2023/2 – which follows on from *North Atlantic Wanderings* in *Flying Fish* 2022/2. Both voyages were in his Alajuela 38 *Iron Bark III*.

Martin Fuller and Stephanie Connor aboard *Sandpiper*, a Sadler Starlight 39, received the Vasey Vase for their passage from Lewisporte, Newfoundland up the east coast of Labrador and across the Davis Strait to Greenland before heading southeast through

Prins Christian Sund to lay *Sandpiper* up in Iceland for the winter. The webinar of their cruise is available at www.oceancruisingclub.org/webinars or see *Cruising Labrador* in *Flying Fish* 2024. The Qualifier's Mug went to 14-year-old Reijsa Treacy Wolnik who, with financial assistance from the Youth Sponsorship Programme, flew from New Zealand to join her grandfather and one other crew member aboard his Vancouver 32, *Máirín*. From the Canaries they sailed to the Cape Verde islands and thence across the Atlantic to Guadeloupe. A *Very Tight Crew*, in *Flying Fish* 2024, describes their preparations for the passage as well as the voyage itself.

OCC members made a number of other impressive passages in 2023. In *Flying Fish* 2023/2 Jeremy Bagshaw's *Sailing around Cape Horn: A Golden Globe Race Participant's Perspective* shares his experience of rounding the world's most famous cape in his 50-year-old OE32 *Olleanna*. *East Greenland, At Last* sees the inimitable Rev Bob Shepton realise a long-held dream when he assembles a crew to sail *Cornelia*, a Bruce Roberts 38, from Scotland via Iceland to Greenland, where they sail and climb their way around Milne Island before returning by the same route – not bad for an 88-year-old! Further south, Wim and Elisabeth Van Blaricum tell of their 4300 mile passage from Huahine in French Polynesia to Valdivia in Chile, aboard their steel Bruce Roberts Offshore 44, in *Bengt in the South Seas Towards Chile*. Finally, and making the most of a Youth Sponsorship grant, Tom Lawson sails from St Lucia to the Marquesas: *A First-Time Sailor goes for a Walkabout* aboard the eponymous *Walkabout*, a Beneteau Oceanis 45 – though the title is something of an understatement as he remained aboard until Tonga.

In *Flying Fish* 2024, Laura Hampton, previously a Youth Sponsorship recipient, tells of sailing as First Mate aboard UNICEF in the 2023/4 Clipper Round the World Race – including climbing her 95ft (29m) mast in darkness to untangle a spinnaker wrap while the boat surfed at up to 14 knots. She had written about *Preparing for the 2023 Clipper Round the World Yacht Race* in *Flying Fish* 2023/2.

Also in *Flying Fish* 2024, Curtis Jazwiecki recounts his and Kate's travels aboard their J/46 *Sweet Ruca* from Patagonia via the Chilean Channels to Puerto Montt and finally across the Pacific to French Polynesia in *Sailing the Seas Less Travelled*. And last but not least, a clutch of Youth Sponsorship recipients



**Laura Hampton heading up
UNICEF's 95ft (29m) mast to
untangle a spinnaker wrap**

cross the Atlantic at different latitudes in *From Geopark to Geopark ~ A Voyage from Newfoundland to the Azores* (David Calder), *Aboard Sea Jester, bound for the Azores* (Max Gordon) and *Expedition to Greenland* (Luke Franklin).

Board and GC discussions/decisions in 2023

At their first meetings after the AGM the Board and GC re-allocated the tasks identified in the Club Management structure to those newly elected, so that no time would be wasted moving forward. The environment remained a very live issue, with the OCC *Climate Change and Ocean Cruising* document added to the www.oceancruisingclub.org/OCC-Knowledge section. More information on environmental issues will be found at www.oceancruisingclub.org/Oceans-Under-Threat. A proposal had been made following the AGM that past Commodores should have non-voting seats on the GC. This was discussed at some length but although some advantages could be seen it was rejected unanimously.

During the summer Past Commodore and long-term editor Anne Hammick suggested that *Flying Fish* be changed from twice yearly publication to a single issue annually with a larger page size. When put to the membership this received overwhelming approval, with 70% in favour, 15% ambivalent and only 15% against, so it was agreed to implement the change for *Flying Fish* 2024.

Earlier in the year Reg Barker had updated the GC about his plans for Platinum Anniversary events. He reported that there had been a lot of positive feedback, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region, and it was hoped that more interest might be generated in the Mediterranean despite it not being an 'ocean'. In September he added that he had been reaching out to other clubs and associations to organise joint events, both to celebrate the OCC's forthcoming anniversary and to introduce the Club to their members. By November he had created an 'event map' of proposed Platinum Anniversary gatherings, though it was expected that many would be spur-of-the-moment ad hoc parties.

2024

Events and rallies in 2024

The AGM, held in Liverpool on 20th April, was attended by just over 50 people, with similar turnout for the very enjoyable dinner at the Royal Mersey Yacht Club the previous evening. Fi Jones was elected Commodore, Zdenka Griswold Vice Commodore and Derrick Thorrington Rear Commodore, while Charles Griffiths was elected for a second term as Treasurer. New on the GC, joining Joerg Esdorn and Steve Siguaw, were Moira Bentzel, Amy Jordan, Richard Kingsnorth, Linda Lane Thornton, Alasdair Maclean and Neil McCubbin, while Guy Chester was elected for a second term. Kirsten Neuschäfer, joint winner of the 2022 Seamanship Award for her rescue of Tapio Lehtinen during that year's Golden Globe Race – which she

then went on to win – was elected to Honorary Membership. Both the Commodore and the Treasurer's reports confirmed that in its 70th year the Club continued to thrive, with sound finances, a growing membership (nearly 6% over the year) and more than 40 events already organised for the Platinum Anniversary. All the Club's various activities, including Youth Sponsorship, Mentoring, the Charitable Trust, publications, Facebook, the OCC App, the Forum, the Fleet Map and the Port Officer network were overseen by named Board or GC members who ensured their smooth operation. There was little doubt that, despite the Covid years, Simon was handing on a flourishing and active Club.

OCC members have many talents and partying is certainly one of them, so the decision to celebrate the Club's 70th Anniversary by holding as many social events as

possible around the world was totally appropriate. Rear Commodore Reg Barker was the ideal person to promote the idea and a deserving recipient of the OCC Events & Rallies Award for 2024. The 'advertisement' on page 91 of *Flying Fish* 2023/2 shows what he had in mind, and he also asked members to report impromptu gatherings back to the Club, preferably with a photo or two.

The best way to get an idea of the dozens of OCC events which took



The Ocean Cruising Club Platinum Anniversary

"A year of celebrations around the world"

Pot Luck Supper



... to make the parties as easy as possible to set up and run. If you are feeling adventurous, try the Sunflower Raft, for a truly memorable gathering.

70th Anniversary House Flag



... available from the Club Secretary now. Fly yours throughout the year and particularly at your OCC parties.

OCC Cocktails



... we challenge you to produce a yellow and blue anniversary cocktail. Share your cocktail recipes!

Photo Competition



... capturing the spirit of the celebrations. Raft ups, cocktails, 70th anniversary flags, parties: submit your best snaps.

Share the Fun at Anchor



... and invite other yachts at the anchorage, they might not know yet what the OCC is all about.

When there's a gathering of yachts in an anchorage there's an excuse for an OCC 70th Platinum Anniversary Rendezvous Party!

Everyone has a part to play in making 2024 a year of fun out on the water.

Larger social events and cruises in company are planned in Japan, Fiji, New Zealand, Stockholm, Australia, eastern USA, Bahamas, the Mediterranean, the Macaronesia Islands (Azores, Madeira, Canaries and Cabo Verde islands) and more ... wherever you are cruising in 2024 the Ocean Cruising Club will be celebrating! Look out for the latest information in the OCC's eBulletin, on the OCC Website and the OCC Members Group Facebook page.

The Platinum Anniversary 'advertisement'

place during the Anniversary year is to download a copy of the 70th Anniversary *Souvenir Report* from www.oceancruisingclub.org/members/documents. This lists 44 events by month, but doesn't include the many impromptu beach or cockpit parties which also took place. If one defines an OCC 'event' as one which was either promoted in advance or reported afterwards – or usually, though not always, both – nearly 60 are thought to have taken place during 2024, many of which were written up in different issues of the *Newsletter*, downloadable at www.oceancruisingclub.org/members/Newsletters. Listed in order of date, with the number of participants included where known, they were:

- 7th January: **Puerto Williams Get-Together**, Micalvi Yacht Club, Chile (7 people and 3 boats)
- 10th January: **Galapagos Gathering** (10 people and 4 boats)
- 10th January-15th March: **Cruise in Company from Florida's Gulf Coast to the Bahamas**
- 25th January: **Burns Night**, Lasswade, Midlothian
- 7th February-15th March: **Cruise-in-Company from the Chesapeake to the Bahamas**
- 15th February: **Caleta Refugio Catch-Up**, Chilean Patagonia (11 people and 3 boats). *March 2025 NL*, page 20
- 17th February: **Hemingway International Yacht Club**, Havana, Cuba
- 29th February: **St Lucia barbecue**, Rodney Bay, St Lucia (28 people)
- 1st March: **St Lucia Dinner**, Spinnakers Bar, Reduit Beach (27 people)
- 6th March: **Sint Maarten Dinner**, Lagoonies, Sint Maarten (33 people) *June 2024 NL*, page 10

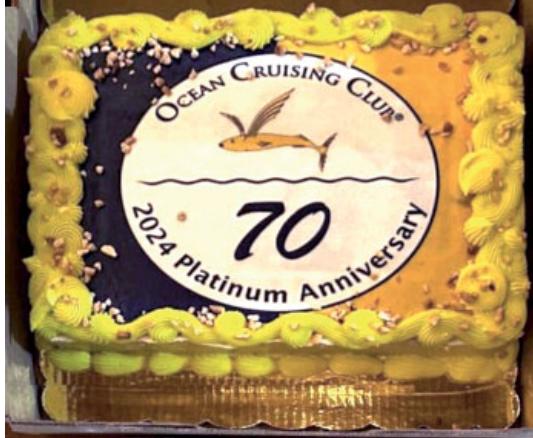


- 16th March: **Roatan Party**, Honduras (10 people and 3 boats) *June 2024 NL*, page 18
- 15th-17th March: **Bahamas Gathering** (with SSCA), Black Point, Exumas (250 people and 125 boats)
- 19th March: **Mexico Meet**, Marina Nayarit, Mexico (22 people) *June 2024 NL*, page 8

Commodore Escrich of the Hemingway International Yacht Club of Cuba greets Sally and Past Commodore Simon Currin on a previous occasion

*In Roatan, one of Honduras's
Bay Islands, a 70th
Anniversary cake was baked*

- ◆ 25th March: **Halifax Gathering**, Royal Nova Scotia Yacht Squadron (60 people)
- ◆ 28th March-1st April: **Kawau Cruise**, Mahurangi River, NZ (15 people and 6 boats) *June 2024 NL, page 9*
- ◆ 6th April: **Whangarei Gathering**, Riverside Drive Marina (26 people and 13 boats) *June 2024 NL, page 15*
- ◆ 7th April: **Newport Lunch**, Royal Prince Alfred Yacht Club, Sydney (12 people) *June 2024 NL, page 14*
- ◆ 19th April: **Royal Mersey Dinner**, Royal Mersey Yacht Club, Liverpool (50 people) *June 2024 NL, pages 3-6*
- ◆ 20th April: **Annual Dinner**, Leonardo Hotel, Liverpool, UK (61 people) *June 2024 NL, pages 3-6*
- ◆ 26th-28th April: **Japan Rally**, Iki Island, Japan (24 people and 12 boats) *June 2024 NL, page 21*
- ◆ 11th May: **West Coast North America Celebrations**, Victoria, BC (50 people) *Dec 2024 NL, page 12*
- ◆ 14th May: **French Polynesia Gathering**, Rarotonga (16 people)
- ◆ 15th May-7th September: **English Channel Encounters Cruise**, Oostende to Morgat
- ◆ 1st June-31st August: **English Channel Encounters Cruise**, Eastbourne to Scilly Isles



An OCC
70th
Anniversary
Party held
during
the 2024
Japan Yacht
Rally. Photo
Fumina
Moriguchi /
Kazi

- ⛵ 4th-6th June: **Greek Rendezvous**, Vliho, Lefkas (25 people) [September 2024 NL, page 7](#)
- ⛵ 10th-15th June: **Lower Chesapeake Bay Cruise**, Hampton Yacht Club (34 people and 12 boats) [September 2024 NL, page 18](#)
- ⛵ 15th-16th June: **Solent Rally and RYS Lunch**, Beaulieu River and Cowes (20 people) [September 2024 NL, page 2](#)
- ⛵ 22nd June-1st July: **Long Island Sound Cruise**, Oyster Bay, NY + 15 ports en route (26 people and 12 boats) [September 2024 NL, page 16](#)
- ⛵ 1st-12th July: **Southern New England Cruise**, Rhode Island (14 people and 7 boats) [September 2024 NL, page 12](#)
- ⛵ 9th-18th July: **Galicia Rendezvous**, Muros (16 people and 8 boats)
- ⛵ 12th July: **Northwest Passage Gathering**, Royal Newfoundland Yacht Club (12 people)
- ⛵ 13th July: **Arctic Rendezvous**, Grimsey Island, Iceland (2 people and 1 boat)
- ⛵ 16th July: **Tahiti Celebration**, La Casa Bianca, Tahiti (39 people) [September 2024 NL, page 4](#)
- ⛵ 10th August: **Curaçao Spontaneous Meet** (14 people)

Upriver during the West Country Meet on 25th August. Club Secretary Rachelle Turk is kneeling on the right with Current Commodore Fi Jones at far right



The Platinum Anniversary flag displayed on Porto Santo during the Macaronesia Cruise

- 10th-11th August: **Scottish Open House Weekend**, Traighuaine, Argyll (20 people)
- 12th August: **Maine Pot Luck**, Rockland Yacht Club (50 people)
- 13th-17th August: **Maine Mini Cruise** (42 people) December 2024 NL, page 16
- 18th August: **Maine Rally**, Camden Yacht Club (73 people) December 2024 NL, page 15
- 22nd-26th August: **Stockholm Archipelago Cruise**, Nynäshamn (25 people and 9 boats) December 2024 NL, page 6
- 24th-25th August: **West Country Meet**, Falmouth, Cornwall (54 people and 12 boats) December 2024 NL, page 8
- 26th August-27th October: **Macaronesia Cruise**, Azores–Madeira–Canaries (13 people and 6 boats) March 2025 NL, page 19
- 7th- 8th September: **Dutch Rendezvous**, Enkhuizen, Netherlands (8 people)
- 10th September: **Musket Cove Party**, Fiji (24 people) December 2024 NL, page 15
- 19th September: **Southampton Boat Show Dinner**, Bursledon, Hants (33 people) December 2024 NL, page 11
- 20th-21st September: **San Francisco Gathering**, Angel Island (22 people and 6 boats) March 2025 NL, page 4
- 6th October: **Great Lakes Gathering**, Walloon Lake, Michigan (12 people and 7 boats) December 2024 NL, page 3
- 9th October: **Annapolis Fall Reception**, Sailing Association, Annapolis (37 people)
- 17th October: **Southern Chesapeake Bay Dinner**, Mathews Yacht Club, Hudgins (22 people) December 2024 NL, page 10
- 18th October: **Zululand Yacht Club Braai**, Richards Bay, South Africa (12 people) December 2024 NL, page 9
- 26th October: **Canaria Get-Together**, Pasito Blanco, Gran Canaria (33 people)
- 9th November: **Scottish Dinner**, Royal Northern & Clyde Yacht Club, Rhu (29 people)
- 12th-14th November: **Algarve Celebration**, Lagos, Portugal (22 people) March 2025 NL, page 12
- 17th November: **Malaysia Dinner**, Pangkor Marina (10 people and 5 boats)



- 21st November: **London Dinner**, St Katharine Docks, London (23 people) March 2025 NL, page 4
- 6th December: **Opua Pot Luck Dinner**, Opua, NZ (22 people) March 2025 NL, page 10
- 12th December: **Royal Cape Yacht Club Lunch**, South Africa (45 people and 19 boats) March 2025 NL, page 11
- 12th December: **Langkawi Pot Luck**, Pulau Singa Besar, Langkawi, Malaysia (25 people and 11 boats) March 2025 NL, page 3
- 22nd December: **Caribbean Christmas Gathering**, Bequia, St Vincent (8 people and 3 boats)

And the Club didn't sit on its hands at year end, as the first (recorded) party of the New Year took place on 9th January in St Lucia, with 30 people present. Reg may well have started a trend!

On the water in 2024

Sadly the Barton Cup, the OCC's premier award since 1981, was not presented in the Club's 70th Anniversary year. It recognises an exceptionally challenging voyage or series of voyages made by a member or members, a very high benchmark which has not merely been maintained but has risen over the years.

Among the awards which were presented was the Vasey Vase, which went to Tim Riley and Carol Osborne for their two-handed transit of the Northwest Passage aboard their Boreal 47 *Lumina* – an achievement which, a decade or two ago, would almost certainly have netted them the Barton Cup. They had to hand-steer for much of the transit after their autopilot failed and they encountered some serious ice en route. Turn to *The Northwest Passage: Experience is something you gain ... shortly after you realised it would have been handy in Flying Fish 2025* to read the full story or visit yachtlumina.co.uk.

It is something of a surprise that Carla Gregory and Alex Helbig have not won the Water Music Trophy previously, as *The Marshall Islands – A Pacific Cyclone Season Alternative in Flying Fish 2024* was by no means the first time they had contributed useful information about rarely-visited places. Since 2014 they have been full-time cruisers aboard their Trintella 45 *Ari B*, named after Ari Beach in the Maldives where they first met more than 30 years ago. They also write an excellent blog at www.sy-arib.com.

The OCC Jester Award went to Jacqueline Evers, who at the age of 54 decided to sail around the world singlehanded in her 27ft *Grinde, Loveworkx* – a decision backed by her husband and 19-year-old son. In *Sailing Dreams and Flying Fish* in the March 2024 Newsletter she describes her passage from Mindelo in the Cape Verdes to Chaguaramas, Trinidad, following it up with *From Caribbean Shores to Pacific Horizons* in the June issue. In September 2024 she reached New Zealand. Jacqueline documents her travels, mainly by means of videos, at [@sailingloveworkx](https://www.instagram.com/sailingloveworkx).

Jacqueline Evers's 27ft Loveworkx at anchor in Panama's San Blas Islands



Among the other notable passages made by members in 2024 were Gaia's travels around Patagonia and into the Pacific related by Roving RC Thierry Courvoisier, a prolific contributor to both *Flying Fish* and the *Newsletter* – see *South America via the Beagle Channel in Flying Fish 2024* and *Gaia In The South Pacific: Patagonia To Papeete*, starting on page 227 of *Flying Fish 2025*. New to its pages is Harry Anderson. Having flown solo in his single-engine aircraft to all seven continents between 2011 and 2014, in 2022 he set off westabout to repeat the challenge at sea level aboard *Phywave*, his *Allures 40.9*, as recounted in *Solo Voyage to Seven Continents: Moving from Wings to Sails in Flying Fish 2025*.

Another passage made in 2024 was Heather Richard's *Pacific Cup Regatta: The Best Graduation Present, Ever!* which appears in *Flying Fish 2025* having just missed the deadline for the previous issue. The graduation present of the title was for her son Julius, who crewed for her in the two-handed Pacific Cup Regatta from San Francisco to Hawaii aboard their 43ft sloop *Carodon*. Also racing, but this time singlehanded, was American member David Southwell, who cited a passage from Plymouth, UK to Newport, RI when applying to join the OCC in 2024. This is the route of OSTAR (the Observer Singlehanded TransAtlantic Race) in which,

David Southwell's Alchemy, in which he took line honours in OSTAR 2024



sailing his J/121 *Alchemy*, he took line honours. His highly readable account of both the preparation and the race itself appears in *Flying Fish* 2025. Finally, and with the assistance from the Youth Sponsorship Programme, German member Vivienne Mack was able to cross from Mindelo in the Cape Verdes to Grenada aboard *Topas*, a 42ft catamaran, also recounted in *Flying Fish* 2025.

One rarely meets Malaysian sailors and Fabian Fernandez, winner of the Qualifier's Mug for 2023, has faced cultural, linguistic and financial barriers while pursuing his dream to circumnavigate aboard his 37ft sloop *Destiny 12*. His double-handed qualifying passage covered the 1800 miles from Langkawi to the Maldives, and he is now nearing the end of his circumnavigation. See *Sailing Through Unfamiliar Waters* in the December 2024 Newsletter and *Different Horizons: Cruising through Western and Asian Eyes* in *Flying Fish* 2025.

Board and GC discussions/decisions in 2024

Having confirmed that he would be stepping down as Commodore at the AGM, Simon offered to take on the newly-created Digital Content Editor brief. Karen Soule volunteered to become the Club's PR Officer, another of Daria Blackwell's many roles. A long, detailed and well-illustrated Annual Report was circulated to the membership by e-mail before the AGM. It contains hundreds of facts and figures on all aspects of the OCC's organisation and is well worth reading. It concludes with the Commodore's Report, which is also downloadable separately. Both documents will be found at www.oceancruisingclub.org/members/documents.

Two of those elected to the GC the previous April had resigned, with a third planning to step down at the AGM, but all had notified Club Secretary Rachelle Turk in sufficient time for replacements to be nominated. Of longer duration, in that he was coming to the end of his second three-year term on the GC, was Eoin Robson, who had been Members' Support Network Co-ordinator for Europe, Scandinavia, the East Atlantic and the Mediterranean since the role was created in 2020, as well as running the Awards portfolio with typical humour and efficiency over the previous five years.

With few personnel changes the Board were able to get down to business almost immediately post-AGM. An early decision was for the Newsletter to go fully digital in the foreseeable future, with hard-copies of *Flying Fish* and the *Members' Handbook* only available on an 'opt-in' basis. Later in the year it was agreed that, while printed copies of both publications would continue to be available for existing members who wished to receive them, this option would not be open to new joiners.

As in previous years, in early May Club Secretary Rachelle was still trying to contact more than 200 members whose subscriptions (due on 1st February) remained unpaid, and Commodore Fi Jones offered to write to those still outstanding. It was hoped that the majority would remain members. Although the Club was looking to increase income and cut costs, particularly of printing and postage, Treasurer Charles Griffiths

confirmed that there was still £350,000 in the reserves. He stressed, however, that the Club should always seek to live within its means.

There had been a higher than usual number of applications for Conservation Challenge Grants, and sub-committee chair Derrick Thorrington suggested that a Development Adventure Grant should be introduced, aimed at younger crews whose plans did not meet the very high bar for an Adventure Challenge Grant. There had also been six applicants for Youth Sponsorship grants.

During the spring, Club Archivist Anne Hammick had spent many hours preparing and indexing the early (1964 to 1989) editions of *Flying Fish* prior to them being uploaded to the website, where they joined those from 1990 onwards. All 108 issues – of which she had edited well over half – are now accessible at oceancruisingclub.org/Flying-Fish-Archive.

On 31st August Vice Commodore Zdenka Griswold resigned her OCC responsibilities due to serious health issues. Sympathies were expressed by the Board and GC, as well as by the Publications Sub-Committee which she had chaired since 2019, all of whom knew they would miss her efficiency and unfailing good humour. She was later nominated for, and received, the 2024 OCC Award – see page 13 of *Flying Fish* 2025. Her obituary appears on page 289.

With an average age in the later 60s, it was agreed that more thought should be given to the needs and interests of younger members – the first step would be to create a WhatsApp group for members under 40. As anticipated, WhatsApp was growing in popularity, with 14 groups to Facebook's eight. There was also the OCC Forum and OCC on Instagram. In December the Board decided that the Club should withdraw from X and open a Blue Sky account. A YouTube channel had also been set up at www.youtube.com/@OceanCruisingClub, with more Club videos at www.oceancruisingclub.org/Videos#.

Outside the Club, a proposal was made to the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre suggesting that, on receiving a distress call from a yacht, the MRCC contact the OCC who would relay the alert via the appropriate WhatsApp group(s) to members in the area who might be able to assist.



**Vice Commodore Zdenka Griswold
at Merchant Row in Penobscot Bay, Maine 2019**

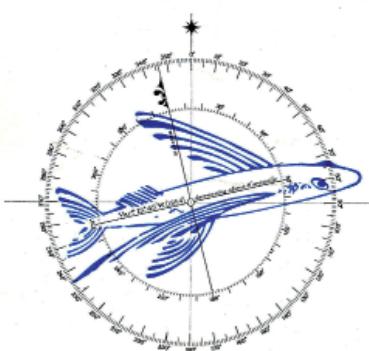
In September, for the first time since records had been kept, membership numbers were reported to have fallen over the previous 12 months, though only by 0.7%. A recovery to at least 2% was expected by the close of the Club's financial year on 30th November, an expectation which proved correct. Club Secretary Rachelle Turk reported that the average length of membership had decreased slightly from eleven years to nine, and that 30% of those who had joined in the previous five years had already resigned, though Covid might have been partially responsible for this.

In November, the Board decided that Emily Winter should join Anne Hammick as Co-Editor of *Flying Fish*, with the Editorship passed on in full at the end of 2025. Initially Anne agreed but, on reflection, decided that this was unlikely to work and Emily took over as Editor on 1st January 2025. Anne was concerned that this would put too much strain on Emily, who also edited the *Newsletter* and the e-Bulletin, and offered to handle book reviews and obituaries for *Flying Fish* 2025 on an unpaid basis. By December it was accepted that the Club would need additional admin support and a job description was drafted for circulation to members. One of those who responded was Romy McIntosh, who soon took over responsibility for the e-Bulletin – but that's for the 80th – or Oak – Supplement.



flying fish

1990/2



Ocean Cruising Club Journal

Epilogue

In a few month's time I will have been an OCC member for 50 years and I have been near its centre for many of them. I joined the Committee (as it was then called) in the 1980s and served as a Rear Commodore from 1993 until 1998. Sixteen years later I again stood for election as a Flag Officer, and progressed up the ranks faster than I'd have wished, from Rear Commodore in 2014 to Vice Commodore in 2015 and Commodore in 2016. In 2023 I was both proud and surprised to be elected to Honorary Membership.

I also edited *Flying Fish* from 1990 until 2024, taking it from 112 pages measuring 148mm x 210mm (5.8in

The cover of my first Flying Fish as Editor, back in 1990

*Zora threads her
way between
icebergs off
Greenland. Photo*

Rhys Walters.

*Design Anne
Hammick*

x 8.3in) and containing 25 black and white photos, to 360 pages measuring 165mm x 240mm (6.5in x 9.5in) containing more than 500 photos, nearly all in colour. During that time I had many excellent proof-readers, several of whom were kind enough to read the draft text and/or check the laid-out pages of this Supplement. My thanks (in strictly alphabetical order) to Nicky Barker, Nicole Burns, Penelope Curtis, Jane Eastman, Liz Hammick, Amy Jordan, Niki Phillips and Rachelle Turk.

The OCC has had its ups and downs during those 50 years including, at various times, serious financial problems. The research for this Platinum Supplement has not only been fascinating but has made it clear that our Club is now on an even keel financially and is going from strength to strength in terms of membership. I would love to be around in 2054 to read *The Second Fifty Years* – which is just possible as my grandmother lived to 101, the age I would reach that year.

flying fish

2024



The Journal of the Ocean Cruising Club®

Nicky Barker, Nicole Burns, Penelope Curtis, Jane Eastman, Liz Hammick, Amy Jordan, Niki Phillips and Rachelle Turk.

Anne Hammick
OCC Archivist
December 2025