

RORC AT 100



2, Pall Mall Place, S.W.1.
 (These notices to address letters to this address for the moment)
 22nd November, 1940.

DEAR SIR,

I regret to inform you that the Club Premises at Pall Mall Place, have been bombed and partially demolished, and that the Steward was killed. In view of this, the Annual Meeting and Dinner has been postponed to Saturday, the 21st December, in place of the 14th December as announced on the enclosed Notice.

The Royal Thames Yacht Club has kindly invited members of the Royal Ocean Racing Club to use its Clubhouse at 60, Knightsbridge. (This, of course, applies to full members only.)

It is hoped that new premises will soon be found in a convenient position. Both members and honorary members will be notified of this.

Members will be glad to know that the Club records, as well as the cups and trophies and a quantity of furniture, have been saved.

E. W. R. PETERSON,
 Honorary Secretary.



15th August 1975

OCEAN RACE.
 Flag A 11.00 a.m. First Gun and Blue Peter 11.55 a.m.
 Starting Gun and Flag lowered 12 noon.

SAILING INSTRUCTIONS:

The Starting Line is between the Mast Rest, carrying the Club Ensign Post on the West End of Pier in line with the Semaphore Spire in Ryde.

At least Thirty Minutes before the First Race the Arm of the Semaphore will be raised to denote which way the Yachts start.

Ten Minutes before the Start the Preparatory Flag denoting the Race will be hoisted.

Five Minutes before the Start the Pilot Gun will be fired and the Blue Peter lowered.

Five Minutes exactly after the First Gun, the Starting Gun will be fired, and the Blue Peter lowered. The Preparatory Flag will be fired at the same time. Should the Gun misfire the Blue Peter will give the signal to start.

Should it be necessary to recall any Yacht, the said Yacht's number will be exhibited, and two small Guns fired in quick succession.

COURSE.

Course from Ryde, passing to the Southward of the Isle of Wight, around the Fastnet Rock, leaving it upon the Starboard Hand, thence to Plymouth, and across the Finishing Line between the Naval Signal Station and the North Drayk Buoy.

ANY YACHT GIVING UP THE RACE MUST NOTIFY THE R.O.R.C., SEEHORS, PICCY, LONDON, IMMEDIATELY BY TELEGRAM

RORC AT 100

Left: To celebrate our 100 years, the Salcombe Gin RORC Centenary Race will take place on 20 September.
Below: Official celebratory RORC dinners and functions will be taking place in venues around the world during 2025.
Photos: RORC/Paul Wyeth/pwpictures.com

2025 represents a landmark year for the Club as it celebrates its centenary. On 23 August 1925, as the first 'Ocean Race' (subsequently rechristened the Fastnet Race) was finishing, the Ocean Racing Club was founded at a dinner at the Royal Western Yacht Club up on Plymouth Hoe.

Lieutenant Commander EG Martin OBE, skipper of *Jolie Brise* and winner of the first Ocean Race, was appointed Commodore and the King's Sailing Master, Sir Philip Hunloke, became President. The rest of the committee comprised Yachting Monthly editor, Maldon Heckstall-Smith; eminent yachtsman, Sir Ralph Gore (subsequently first President of the IYRU, now World Sailing); the Club's US representative, Herbert Stone; and the original instigator of the Ocean Race, Weston Martyr. The Club started with 34 founding members, each paying an annual subscription of £1.

Based upon an American idea - the first Ocean Race was inspired by the Bermuda Race - the Club has always been international. Today more than one third of its 3,800-4,000 members are from overseas, heralding from 58 countries, as far afield as Papua New Guinea, Zambia and Nepal.



From running the Ocean Race alone, the Junior Ocean Race (today known as the Channel Race) was added in 1928 and the programme evolved dramatically to the extent that by the 1950s it was up to 18 races. In the 1970s the Club was involved in early editions of the Whitbread Round the World Race and ran the pinnacle event in international grand prix yachting - the Admiral's Cup. Today the RORC programme comprises 25 races, from its historic domestic ones to other 600-milers such as the RORC Caribbean 600 and Roschier Baltic Sea Race, as well as supporting events in far-away locations from Oman to Singapore.

The RORC's Rolex Fastnet Race has grown to become, by far, the world's largest offshore race. While there were just seven starters in 1925, in 2023 430 yachts competed. *Jolie Brise's* winning average speed in 1925 was 3.78 knots; to date, the highest average speed at which the race has been covered is 21.9 knots, set by the 100ft foiling trimaran *Maxi Edmond de Rothschild* in 2019.

Throughout its history the Club has run and evolved its own rating rules; the first RORC rule, followed by the halcyon two decades of global unity brought about by IOR, then CHS, the short-lived IMS, before CHS was rebranded IRC for the new millennium.

2025

The core of the Club's celebrations in 2025 are in its race programme:

👑 joint organising authority of the event that kicked-off ocean racing in 1866, the west to east Transatlantic Race (see p26)

👑 a reintroduced Admiral's Cup (see p22), to be held for the first time in 22 years

👑 potentially another 400+ bumper entry in a special centenary edition Rolex Fastnet Race

RORC centenary book

For its 75th anniversary the Club worked with distinguished author and nautical and WWII historian Ian Dear to write the history of the Royal Ocean Racing Club. For 2025 the Club has commissioned an update, effectively from where the first book left off.

This will focus upon the growth of the Fastnet Race; its sponsorship from Rolex and the move to Cherbourg-en-Cotentin. It will examine the decline of the Admiral's Cup and its re-emergence in 2025, plus the club's new races like the RORC Caribbean 600 and Transatlantic Race and milestones like the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club merger and the rebuilding of its Cowes Clubhouse. IRC will be covered having become the dominant rating rule globally, along with how offshore race boat design and the sport of offshore racing have evolved.

To write the latest chapter in its history, the RORC has commissioned James Boyd, a yachting journalist with more than 40 years' experience and for the past 12 years, editor of this Yearbook.

James' journalistic career began in the early 1980s as the lone foreigner covering Breton shorthanded offshore racing, including the 1984 Quebec-St Malo, 1985 Course de l'Europe and 1986 Route du Rhum as sailing

RORC centenary celebrations

In addition, the RORC will be hosting a number of events for its international members around the world:

13 March - New York Yacht Club, New York

29 March - Royal Cork Yacht Club, Ireland

5 April - Yacht Club de France, Paris

9/10 May - Amsterdam, the Netherlands

19 July - Centenary lunch, Cowes Clubhouse (invitation only)

12 Sept - The Box, Plymouth

September TBC - Hamburg, Germany

8 October - Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club

18 October - Royal Malta Yacht Club

15 November - Centenary Gala Dinner, London

21 December - Cruising Yacht Club of Australia, Sydney

correspondent for The Daily Telegraph and numerous magazines. In 1989 he joined Yachting World as Features Editor, then Assistant Editor, where he continued to write about offshore racing, including the Whitbread Round the World Race, BOC Challenge and Vendée Globe, plus the first Jules Verne and solo round the world record attempts.

In 2001 he was headhunted to be editor of the leading yacht and dinghy racing website madforsailing.com, winner of the Media Award at the 2002 British Nautical Awards. This website he acquired and ran for 15 years as the dailysail.com. Throughout this period he covered all the RORC's races for the dailysail.com, while event reporting for Rolex and then

for the Club directly. Today he works with former RORC Admiral Andrew McIrvine for the International Maxi Association and for classes such as the RC44.

Physically, the '2000-2025' book will be the same size as its predecessor, enabling the two to be stacked neatly by one another on a bookshelf.

RORC Centenary Race

Following the end of the Season's Points Championship for 2025, and to conclude the celebrations for its big anniversary, the Club is to hold its Salcombe Gin RORC Centenary Race on 20 September in Cowes.

Unlike all of the Club's many other races, this will be unique in being a pursuit race, with staggered starts taking place by class with the slowest heading off first. "The aim is to get everyone back to the Cowes Clubhouse in time for the end of season prize-giving and a party," as Racing Manager Steve Cole puts it.

Befitting an offshore racing club in its 100th year, the race will be no mere pillowfight up and down the Solent, but will have a duration of around eight hours for the smaller boats, six for the faster ones. This means that, depending upon wind conditions, the course will most likely take the fleet out of the Solent to Selsey Bill or in the opposite direction into Christchurch Bay.



From the Yachting Monthly office on Albemarle St, to its first clubhouse on Pall Mall (destroyed in WWII), the RORC today has two clubhouses - the two townhouses knocked into one that now form 20 St James' Place in central London and the former Castle Rock/Royal Corinthian YC in Cowes - while its Rating Office is today based within the Berthon Boatyard in Lymington.

