

Picture at right is an adaptation of a painting by Roy Glanville commissioned by OCC founder Humphrey Barton. Depicted is his 25 foot yacht *Vertue XXXV* sailing trans-Atlantic in 1950.

# Ocean Cruising Club



## Meet Our Members

### MEET OUR MEMBERS

Welcome to the first in a series of biographies featuring fellow OCC members. Some you may know, or some you've heard of, while others will be newly introduced to you through this series. Whatever the level of familiarity, the cruisers you'll be reading about come from all over the world and exemplify the unique blend of personal accomplishment, welcoming friendship, and willingness to assist others in realizing their cruising dreams. These characteristics are what make the OCC an exceptional collection of ordinary people. These stories remind us what our Club stands for, and why, when you see a flying fish burgee in a harbor or on the open water, you know you belong to a club that not only encourages long-distance cruising, but also celebrates the people who enjoy this rewarding lifestyle.

## Featured Member: Humphrey Barton, OCC Founder

Home Port: Lymington, UK

Written By: Pat Pocock (his daughter)



Hum Barton in his prime

### How It All Began

My father, Humphrey Barton or Hum, as he was known to all, was born in 1900. His sailing career started as a 12-year old in a home built boat in a snowstorm on a pond on Wimbledon Common. The boat promptly capsized leaving Hum and his younger brother covered in mud as they dragged the remains ashore. This prompted the local butcher's boy passing on his bicycle to say "*Gor Blimey, you won't 'alf be in trouble when your muvver sees you!*"

### World War I

Hum was sent to school at Haileybury and was there during most of the 1914 -1918 war. In 1918 he joined up with the Royal Flying Corps (which later became the Royal Air Force). He qualified as a pilot in Sopwith Pups and Sopwith Dolphins, but not in time to be sent into action, to his great disappointment.

### Early Boating

In 1922 my father found himself in Peterborough, laying electric cables for Callendars Cables, and this is where he bought himself a 12-foot 6-inch sailing dinghy, *Kittiwake*. He had some hair-raising experiences crossing the Wash, including one stormy night taking refuge aboard an anchored pilot vessel. Later his firm moved him to Deal, Kent, on the Channel coast, where he acquired the 16-foot quarter decked Bermudian sloop, *Lady Nanella*, and kept her on the beach. During the summer he sailed her 10 times across the Straits of Dover to France and, at times, sailed out with the newspapers and post for the men who manned the lightships on the Goodwin Sands.

Next Hum was sent out to what was then Malaya, now Malaysia, to put up high tension transmission lines. Whilst in Kuala Lumpur the Port Dickson Yacht Club started up and my father bought one of the first 14-foot Dublin Waterwags in which he both raced and cruised. On one occasion he and a friend crossed the Straits of Malacca to Sumatra in this 14 footer, a distance of some 50 miles.

### First Cruising Boats

On returning to England, my father chartered the 12-ton auxiliary gaff yawl, *Temptress* (later to become famous when Edward Allcard bought her) and sailed her with his brother and sister to Spain and back. He always said he came back a much wiser man concerning the handling of a seagoing yacht after this adventurous voyage.

After that there were two more gaff cutters, the 5-ton, *Jean II*, and the much bigger Fife cutter, *Dauntless*, both sailed and raced very hard in Scottish and Irish waters. At this time Hum contributed many articles to the yachting press.

My father married my mother, Jessie, in 1931 and three years later the twins, my bother Peter and I arrived.

### Quick Facts:

**Most famous boat:** *Vertue XXXV*, "The most perfect small ocean going yacht that has ever been built" were the words used by Humphrey Barton to conclude the narrative of his celebrated crossing of the Atlantic in *Vertue XXXV* in 1950.

- LOA - 25'3"
- LWL - 21'6"
- Beam - 7'2"
- Draft - 4'6"
- Sail Area - 300 sq. feet

In this design Laurent Giles developed all that was best in the traditional English pilot boat. The result is a really seaworthy modern yacht with a performance under sail which could never have been approached by her forebears. Over 130 *Vertues* have made long ocean voyages.

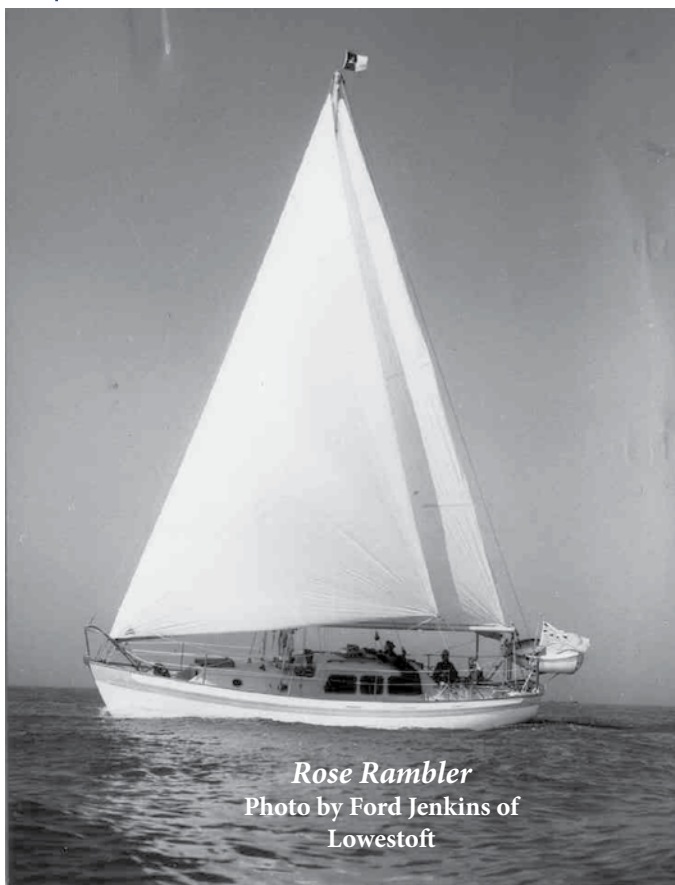
### Another famous boat:

*Rose Rambler*. Also designed by Jack Laurent Giles, this auxiliary cutter was another popular yacht of the post war era.

- LOA - 34'6"
- LWL - 27'6"
- Beam - 9'8"
- Draft - 4'3"

### Links to Other Bios

LINKS NOT YET ACTIVATED



*Rose Rambler*  
Photo by Ford Jenkins of Lowestoft

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# OCC - Meet Our Members - Page 2

## Featured Member: Humphrey Barton



Hum Barton  
in yachting garb  
of the times

### *Laurent Giles & Partners*

In 1936 Hum was invited to join Laurent Giles & Partners and we all moved to Lymington on the Solent. My father looked after the business side of the firm, also the brokerage and later surveying. During that summer my parents borrowed the Jack Giles designed *Andrillot* and sailed her to the Bay of Biscay and back. A year later they sailed the same design, *Monie*, from Lymington eastabout through the Caledonian canal and round to Pwllheli in Wales for the owner. These two yachts became the basis for the successful Vertue class.

Bringing the Giles designed 29-ton gaff rigged cutter, *Dyarchy*, back from Sweden with a crew just before the Second World War began was the next big venture, after which the war changed everybody's lives.

### *World War II*

Laurent Giles & Partners shut down, and my father found himself Deputy Commander Royal Engineers up in the Orkney & Shetland Islands with the rank of major for the next four years. Towards the end of the war he delivered various motor fishing vessels all round the British Isles for the Admiralty.

Whilst stationed in Lerwick in the Shetland Islands Hum spotted a beautiful naval gig, which was duly acquired by the Royal Engineers. He spent his off duty times sailing this fast 30-foot boat with her two masted rig of dipping lugsails of almost equal size all around the many islands with his dedicated crew. It was a long held ambition of all of them to make a voyage out to the tiny island of Foula, twenty six miles out to the west. Foula is three miles long by two miles broad, its highest peak, Sneug, rises to 1,373 feet and descends to a cliff which falls a sheer 1,200 feet to the sea on the west of the island. They had a good reach out there and were glad of the use of an abandoned house for the night. After climbing Sneug next morning and peering over that cliff and noticing the rising wind and the heavy seas breaking on the bottom of the cliff, my father had to decide whether it was wise to return.

My father resolved that they simply must go back, but, intuitively, organised that the foremast was lowered and the mainmast shifted to the centre step. They had a very desperate run back to the Shetlands, with heavy breaking seas swamping the gig time and time again. The full story should be read in my father's book, *"The Sea and Me."* That my father managed to keep the gig at the right angle to the huge breaking seas and find the right hole in the rocks to enter the safe harbour of Walls in such fearsome weather and gathering darkness shows his great skill as a seaman and navigator.



Vertue XXXV  
Hum Barton's most well known boat

### *Post War Activities*

After the war had finally ended Laurent Giles & Partners started up again by designing *"Peter Duck"* for the writer of childrens' sailing books, Arthur Ransome. Another well known client was John Illingworth whose *Myth of Malham* won the Fastnet race in 1947 with my father as one of the crew.

For the summer of 1950 Hum was asked to join a 43-foot ocean racing Giles design aluminium yacht, *Gulvain*, as sailing master to compete in the USA. They sailed first in the Block Island Race, then the Bermuda Race followed by the Transatlantic Race back to Plymouth, UK. The yacht was shipped across the Atlantic; but my father conceived the idea of sailing across in one of Jack Giles' designs both to help publicise Laurent Giles & Partners and to help British exports.

Time and money being tight he found that one of the 25-foot Vertue class would suit and very rapidly fitted her out and made plans, as he needed to be in the States in June. Both the great friends who wanted to sail with him had to drop out for medical reasons, but he found the indomitable and imperturbable Kevin O'Riordan to be a good companion and excellent with the sextant.

### *Trans-Atlantic Passage*

As my father wrote in his book, *"Vertue XXXV,"* it was a very tough 47-day passage. Very few others had attempted an east to west passage going by the direct northern route so early in the year. Seven weeks out the little boat received a severe knock down when lying to in gale force easterly winds with no sail up. A great sea burst open the port coachroof windows allowing a cataract of water to stream in down below. With much pumping, the use of a second sea anchor, and emergency repairs to the coachroof and windows, Hum and Kevin managed to make the little boat seaworthy, but it was a battered little boat that finally arrived in New York.

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## Featured Member: Humphrey Barton



### Best Known For

- Founder of the Ocean Cruising Club in 1954
- Commodore of the Ocean Cruising Club, 1954 – 1960
- Admiral of the Ocean Cruising Club, 1960 – 1980
- Author of 3 books:
  - *Vertue XXXV* (known as *Westward Crossing* in America)
  - *The Sea and Me*
  - *Atlantic Adventures*

### *The Ocean Cruising Club*

The *Vertue XXXV* voyage and the meeting with many cruising people in the States and back in England gave my father the idea of starting up an exclusive club for voyaging members. Thus, with help of many others, the Ocean Cruising club came into being in 1954 and he was the first Commodore, later to become the Admiral. This club is restricted to those who have completed a port to port passage of 1000 miles in a yacht of not more than 70 feet in length. The club has grown into a worldwide gathering of people interested in long distance cruising, and inspired many to make their dreams come true.

### *Retirement*

Sadly Hum's wife, Jessie, died in 1959 and the following year my father retired as an active director of Laurent Giles and bought *Rose of York*, originally designed by the firm for a close friend.

This was the start of his trade wind crossings of the Atlantic, always with a crew. A few years later Hum commissioned a new boat, an existing 36-foot Giles design built for him, and in *Rose Rambler* he would sail out to the Caribbean or the Mediterranean in the autumn and come home to count the grandchildren in the early summer.

### *Marriage to Mary Danby*

Just before having a cataract operation on both eyes in Grenada in

1970 Hum married Mary Danby whom he had met in Malta the previous winter. Mary proved to be a wonderfully keen sailing lady. Together they sailed up the Eastern seaboard of the United States and across the Atlantic many times, finally settling in the Mediterranean.

In 1978 Hum was very honoured to be awarded The Blue Water Medal by the Cruising Club of America – “in recognition of a lifetime of sailing and contribution to ocean cruising”.

Two years later my father died, having come home from Malta for some minor medical treatment



Hum and Mary share a private moment

- Also a member of the Royal Cruising Club, the Royal Ocean Racing Club and the Royal Lymington Yacht Club, for which he served a term as Rear Commodore
- Winner of The Blue Water Medal from the Cruising Club of America in 1978

I sailed many thousands of miles with my father on holidays and on delivery trips to the Mediterranean. Underway, when my father was down below, he always knew exactly what was happening on deck. All his early sailing was done before the electronic age, he streamed a log, he sounded with the lead, he took bearings and used a sextant with much skill.

My memories of my father are of his great qualities as a family man, a skipper, a seaman, a navigator, and a terrific story teller with so many friends all round the world.