

At the Helm – Club Admirals



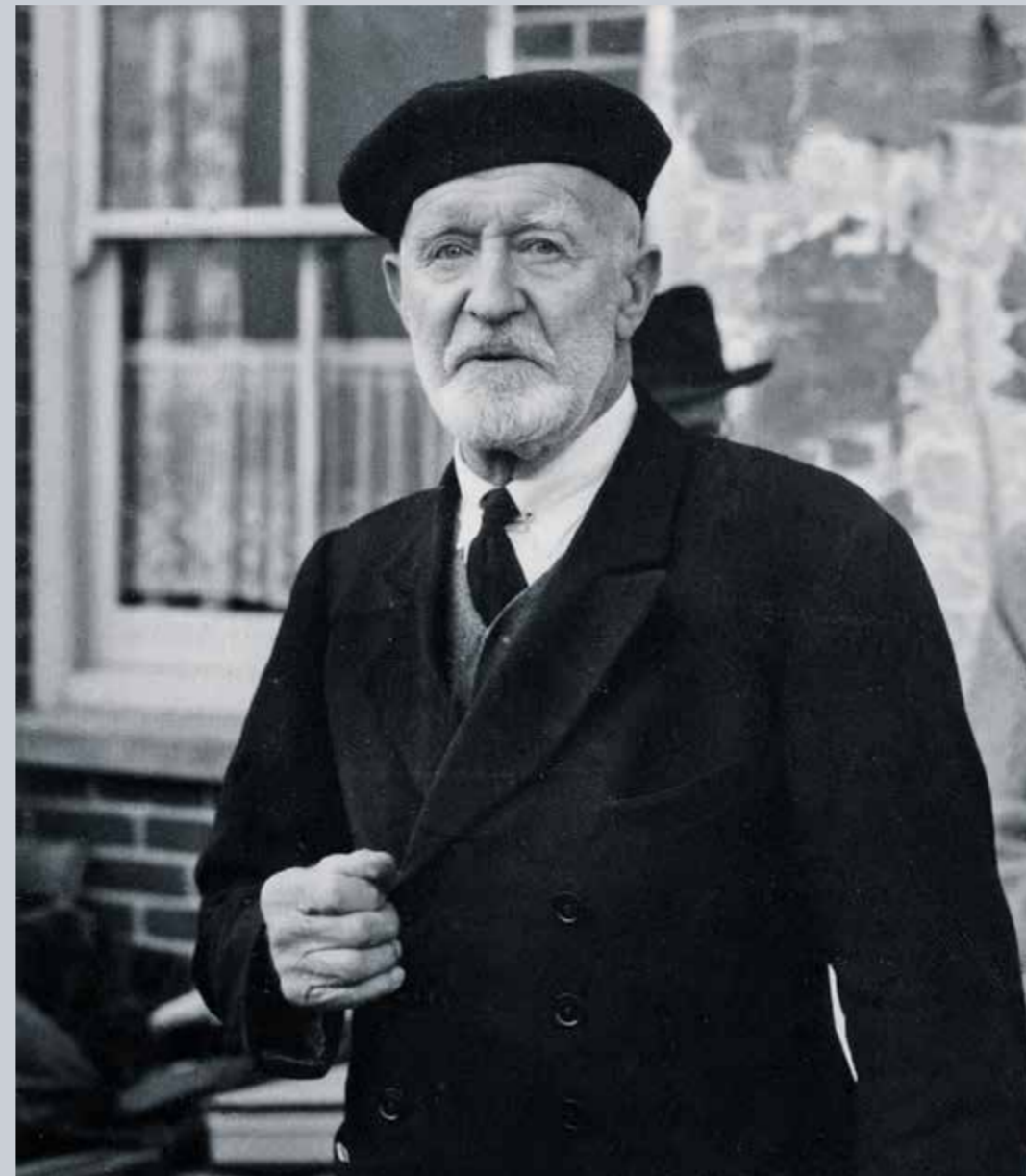
The title of Club Admiral isn't given lightly. Over the years we have had three men who were awarded the honorary title and here we give a brief history of their memorable lives.

Vice-Admiral Berwick Curtis, 1876–1965

At an early age Berwick went to Dartmouth and was commissioned sub-lieutenant in 1896, aged 20.

During the Great War Berwick was promoted captain, in command of the new destroyer HMS Abdiel, a minelayer. He joined the Grand Fleet and took part in the Battle of Jutland. Subsequently he was awarded the DSO and bar for minelaying operations. During the Russian Civil War he commanded the 20th Destroyer flotilla in the Baltic. In 1929 he was appointed Admiral-superintendent in charge of Gibraltar dockyard. He retired in 1932 with the rank of Vice-Admiral, but returned to service during the Second World War as a Commodore of Convoys.

In 1907 Berwick married Mildred Curtis, with whom he had two



daughters and possibly a son. Sadly, Mildred died in 1927 leaving him to raise their children alone. Subsequently he married a rich widow, Violet Cholmley.

When Berwick retired he and Violet moved first to Beach Road and then to Western Parade. He joined the Club in 1935 and started sailing Emerald. Known to his friends as 'Budge', he became Commodore in 1937 and remained in this role for 16 years, the longest unbroken term. He looked after the Club during WWII and saw it back into operation thereafter. In recognition of his extraordinary service, the post of Admiral of the Club was created for him in 1960, and he served in this role until his death in 1965, aged 89.

*Club
Admiral
1960–1965*

Lord Louis Mountbatten, 1900–1979

Louis Mountbatten, son of a German aristocrat, shared close links with the British Royal Family. His father, Prince Louis of Battenberg, was First Sea Lord at the outbreak of World War I, but anti-German feeling forced his resignation. The family changed its name to Mountbatten in 1917.

Mountbatten, known as 'Dickie' to family and close friends, went to the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth in 1914. He joined the Royal Navy in 1916 and saw action in WWI on HMS Lion and HMS Queen Elizabeth.

In 1931 he became Commodore but resigned after a year because of the pressures of his naval work. He received his first command, HMS Daring, in 1934 and at the outbreak of WWII was in command of a flotilla of destroyers which saw considerable action in the Mediterranean. In 1941 his ship, HMS Kelly, was sunk by German dive bombers off the coast of Crete with the loss of more than half the crew.

In April 1942 Mountbatten was appointed Chief of Combined Operations, with responsibility for the preparation of the eventual invasion of occupied Europe. In October 1943 he became Supreme Allied Commander, South East Asia Command, a position he held until 1946. Working with General William Slim, Mountbatten achieved the defeat of the



Japanese offensive towards India and the reconquest of Burma. In 1945 he received the Japanese surrender of Singapore.

In 1947 Mountbatten became Viceroy of India with a mandate to oversee the British withdrawal. For his services during the war and in India he was created Viscount in 1946 and Earl Mountbatten of Burma the following year. In 1953 he returned to the Royal Navy, becoming commander of a new NATO Mediterranean command. The following year he was appointed First Sea Lord, and in 1959 he became Chief of the Defence Staff, retiring in 1965.

In 1969 he was made Admiral of the Club for the Club's Golden Jubilee year, and again in 1979 when it was celebrating its Diamond Jubilee. Sadly, this second period was cut short when Irish terrorists blew up his boat off the coast of County Sligo. His funeral took place in Westminster Abbey and he was buried at Romsey Abbey.

In 1990 his daughter Patricia, who had inherited his title, officially named our dinghy park after her father.

*Club
Admiral
1969 & 1979*

FNM (Nigel) Pusinelli, 1919–2010

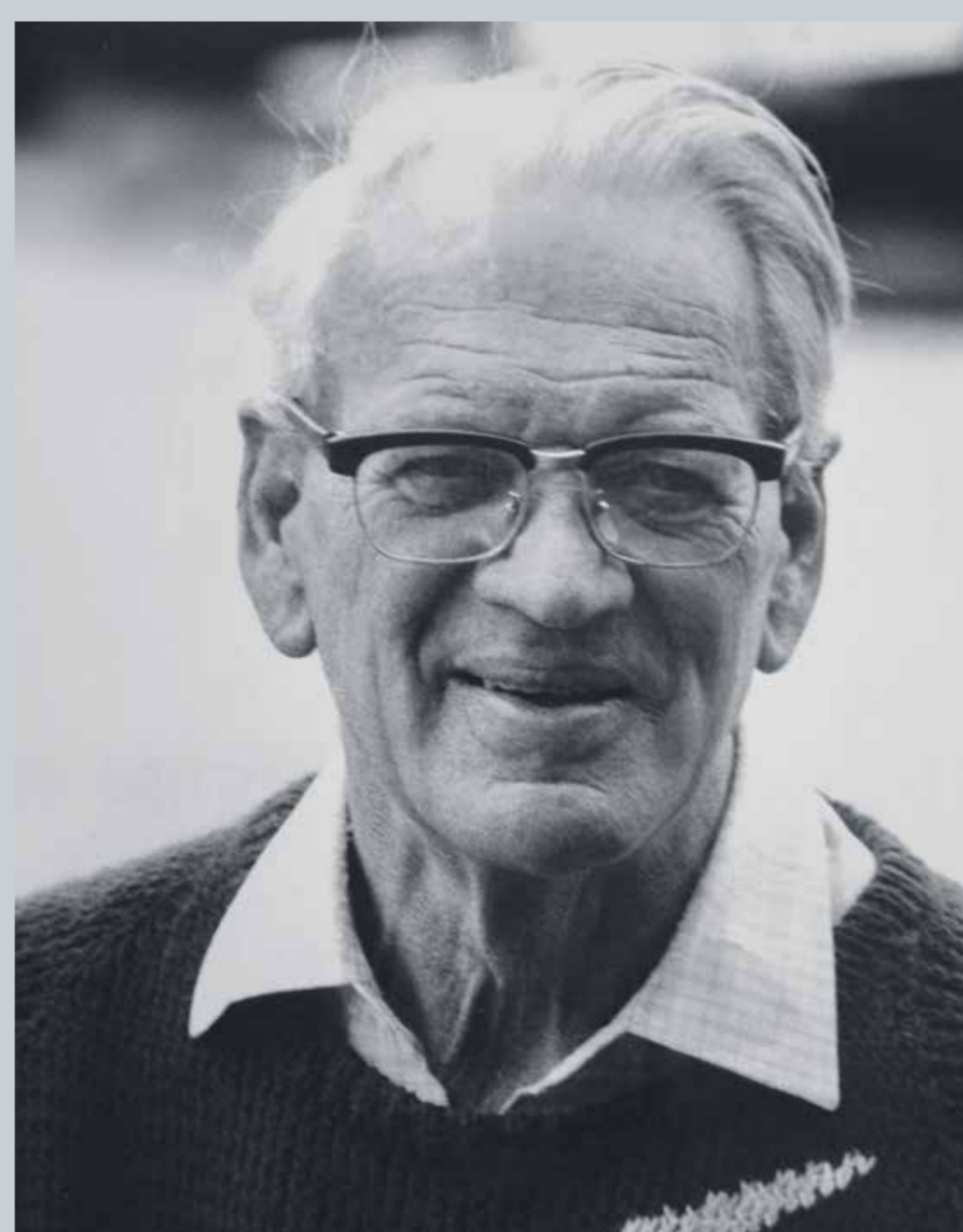
Born in Scotland, Nigel moved with his family when he was 8 years old to Norfolk, where he began his love of sailing, becoming a member of Norfolk Broads Yacht Club. His first boat was a 12ft National Dinghy.

At 18 he went to Pembroke College to read law. However, after 2 years war broke out and he was enlisted in the Royal Artillery. He was evacuated from Dunkirk, where he won his Military Cross for rescuing a brother officer under fire. He married Joan Smith in 1941 and subsequently served in India.

After the war Nigel joined the Colonial Service and was despatched to the Gilbert and Ellis Islands, where he had his own traditional outrigger canoe. In 1958 he was posted to Aden, where he became Director of Establishments and was awarded his CMG and OBE. He became Commodore of Aden YC.

After leaving the Colonial Service, at age 49, he devoted his time to sailing. He had started sailing at Emsworth SC in 1961, beginning in an Emsworth One Design, then converting to an Enterprise, then to an International 505 and finally to Solo dinghies which he raced for some 30 years.

At the Club his first job was as fleet captain for the 'Odds and Sods', but the post of Rear Commodore Sailing was then created for him and thereafter he rose through the flag ranks to become Commodore and, in 1989, Admiral of the Club.



Meanwhile, in 1971 he was appointed Hon Sailing Secretary of Chichester Harbour Federation, where he worked tirelessly with the newly-formed Conservancy to preserve the Harbour as a place of enjoyment, balancing the needs of the sailors with those of other stakeholders. At the same time he maintained interest and enthusiasm in continuing to help run 'Federation Week' until 2005.

In 1974 the RYA Southern Region was formed and Nigel became Secretary and subsequently Chairman. This led to his appointment to the RYA Council for 6 years, serving on two committees. On retirement from his RYA Committee work he was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award by HRH Princess Anne. A further recognition of his contribution to sailing was the presentation of a Federation Plate at the

Club's 90th Birthday dinner in March 2009, which also marked his own 90th birthday a few weeks later.

He died the following year, and his contribution to harbour sailing was also acknowledged by the naming of one of the harbour racing marks after him.

*Club
Admiral
1989–2010*

