

Who's Who

of LMSA

Ahoy Sailors! This month we feature one of LMSA's past Commodores; Allister James!



LMSA: Hi Allister James could you tell us a little about how you got in to sailing:

Allister:

I grew up in Plymouth, a major naval port in the southwest of England, and had an interest in sailing from a very early age. I remember borrowing sailing books from the local library, and going to view the many sailing events that departed/ returned to Plymouth even before taking my first sail.

As a side note: I can remember seeing the boats return to Plymouth after the 1979 Fastnet race. It did not dampen my love of sailing, but it was a very sobering to see the damage that had been inflicted on the boats that survived the storm.

LMSA: Where did you learn to sail?

Allister:

My first introduction to sailing was at the Drake's Island Adventure Center in Plymouth Sound, but it was my father who taught me basic sailing skills aboard a Skipper 14 (a boat with few redeeming features). I acquired my first boat at age thirteen, a plywood Mirror Dinghy that one of my uncle's had built (a very popular boat in the UK with over 70,000 boats built). I joined the local sailing club (Plym Yacht Club) which had an active Junior fleet and raced in their Friday evening series. Another uncle was an Instructor Examiner for the Royal Yachting Association (RYA), and I am indebted to him for most of my formal



training through the RYA National Dinghy Sailing Scheme. Once I outgrew the Mirror I moved to a 'Graduate' as this was the class being sailed at Plym Yacht Club by the older youth.

LMSA: Who are some of your mentors and how did you come to sail at LMSA?

Allister:

My early mentors were my father and my Uncle Dennis who nurtured my early interest in sailing and helped me develop a solid foundation of skills through the RYA sailing scheme.

I was introduced to LMSA by Tom McNally. He invited me to sail in a Wednesday Evening Rum Race on his Flying Scott. During the race I was entranced with the look of 'Euphoria' Eric Hopton's Corsair 27. I was introduced to Eric after the race, and asked whether I could sail with him the next week. Eric generously invited me to race, and I crewed aboard 'Euphoria' for the next couple of months until we broke the centerboard. After which I moved my Catalina 22 Sport 'Arianna' up to Lake Monroe, and Eric continued to sail with me.

From the first time sailing at Lake Monroe I was impressed with the warm welcome and friendliness of everyone at LMSA. Whether sailing my Catalina 22, Capri 22, or the Hobie Wave, everyone is always willing to share their knowledge and help one to become a better more competent sailor.

LMSA: What's your most memorable race?

Allister:

There are a couple of very memorable races. The first aboard 'Precedent' a Sigma 33 OOD during the National Championships (1988?) sailing off the Needles on the Isle of Wight. In almost storm force conditions, and after three general recalls the fleet enjoyed some fantastic sailing. I have a vivid memory of surfing down waves with the spinnaker flying and the speedo pinned hard against the end stop (who remembers those analog instruments?). The other memorable race was the 2019 Mug Race aboard 'Spider Pig' - the first 25 miles on a single tack flying the spinnaker.

The 2018 and 2019 seasons were also very memorable sailing with Rosa Mu on Arianna and then on Spider Pig.

(Allister & Rosa sailing Spider Pig)



LMSA: What are your future sailing goals?

Allister:

I have recently bought 'Runaway' - a Catalina 28MkII, so my next goal is to undertake a refit in preparation for an extended cruise in the waters around Florida and the Bahamas.

(Allister and wife Ruth aboard "Runway")



LMSA: Where do you see yourself sailing in the next 5 years?

Allister:

In the not too distant future I plan to take an extended cruise aboard 'Runaway', starting with a trip along the Okeechobee waterway to the west coast of Florida; out to the Dry Tortugas; back to the Keys and then out to the Bahamas. Longer term plans are to sail in the Atlantic Rally for Cruisers (ARC) from Las Palmas de Gran Canaria to Saint Lucia in the Caribbean. I would also like to spend some time back

in Europe sailing the south coast of England and exploring the Mediterranean.

LMSA: Your Boat Name/alias is _____ how did you earn that name?

Allister:

Not sure whether I have alias, I have been referred to as the 'English Gent', although I tell everyone that I was born and raised in Louisiana.

LMSA: Thank you Allister for your time and comments. Good luck and safe travels!

Reporter comments: Allister James is every bit the English gentleman, he is the only guy I actually feel bad about taking up on the race course. Allister has made an impact at LMSA having served two years as Commodore and consistently racing his boats on Lake Monroe. We all wish you luck with your new Catalina and fair winds on your sailing adventures.

Members that concludes our Who's Who of LMSA for October 2020. LMSA will be reaching out to sailing members and crew for interviews every month over the coming year. Please share your story (s) when LMSA coming tapping on your hull. Sharing knowledge and sailing information has been a long standing tradition here at LMSA. Let us know how you got here and where your sailing is going!

Cheers to a new and exciting year here at LMSA 2020!

The sailing news you want to read.