

Eric Nuttall Award Citation – John Cleave

Eric Nuttall was a pioneering Marblehead sailor in the 1970s and a central figure in the early development of radio sailing within the MYA. As the Association's first Radio Sailing Secretary during a period of rapid growth, Eric played a vital role in shaping the future of the sport. Tragically, he lost his life in 1982 while retrieving racing marks after an evening's sailing at his home club, Cleveland RYC.

In his memory, the MYA established the Eric Nuttall Award, presented occasionally by Council to an individual who, in its opinion, has gone above and beyond in service to radio sailing.

Previous recipients include Norman Hatfield, who served as Vice Chair and Chair from the 1960s to 1985, and Peter Stollery, Vice Chair and Chair from the 1990s to 2012, who also organised the Centenary World Championship at West Kirby Sailing Club and welcomed the Association's Patron, HRH Prince Philip.

The MYA Council is now proud to recognise the outstanding contribution of John Cleave.

John's competitive achievements place him amongst the pioneers of radio sailing. He competed in the first Radio Marblehead National Championship in 1974, finishing second, and followed this with a top ten finish at the inaugural World Championship for Radio Yachts at Gosport in 1975. In 1976, he won the first Radio 10 Metre National Championship at Poole, and in 1980 he achieved international success by winning the East Coast 12 Metre World Championship at Newport with his yacht *Born Free*.

Beyond radio sailing, John was an accomplished sailor in full-sized yachts. He regularly competed at Cowes Week in his Bembridge Redwing and, recognising the potential of swing rigs in the evolving Marblehead class, he commissioned Roger Stollery to design a swing rig for his Redwing. This innovation contributed to his victory at Cowes Week in 1987.

John's influence extended far beyond his own sailing success. As a businessman with exceptional organisational skills, he brought significant value to the MYA. Serving as International Racing Secretary, he played a key role in facilitating British sailors' participation in international events and, equally importantly, in attracting overseas competitors to the UK.

He later advanced to the international stage as Chair of the International Model Yacht Racing Union (now the World Sailing Radio Sailing Division). During his tenure, he oversaw major developments in the sport, including the introduction of the International One Metre (IOM) class to the world — a milestone that continues to shape radio sailing today.

In addition, John provided invaluable support to MYA clubs hosting international events by helping secure sponsorship, ensuring the success and sustainability of these competitions.

The MYA Council gratefully recognises John Cleave’s exceptional and enduring contribution to our sport.

Thank you, John, for all that you have done for radio sailing.

The Award was presented in person by MYA President Derek Priestley, who was pleased to join John and his wife for lunch in Bembridge on the Isle of Wight to mark the occasion.



Darin Ballington

MYA Vice Chair

On behalf of the MYA Council