

SPECIAL EDITION • July 2024



The Grumpy Commodore

Newsletter From Oban Sailing Club

**CLIPPER
SPECIAL
EDITION**



**11 TEAMS
700+ RACE CREW
40,000 NAUTICAL MILES**

Clipper is Coming to Oban!

12th-21st July 2024

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WHAT IS CLIPPER?

The Clipper Race is renowned as one of the most formidable challenges in the natural world, testing the endurance and resilience of its participants in unparalleled ways.

This remarkable race covers a record-breaking 40,000 nautical miles around the globe aboard a fleet of 70-foot ocean racing yachts.

Participants have the option to complete the entire circumnavigation or select one or multiple legs based on their preferences.



The brainchild of Sir Robin Knox-Johnston, the first person to sail solo non-stop around the world, the Clipper Race was launched in 1996. Since then, almost 6,000 crew members from over 60 nations have participated in this extraordinary event. It stands out as the only race where organisers provide a fleet of identical racing yachts, each equipped with a fully qualified skipper and first mate to guide the crew safely through the high seas.

No previous sailing experience is necessary to join the race. Instead, participants undergo an intensive training programme to prepare them for the challenges ahead. This rigorous preparation involves four levels of ocean racer training, ensuring that every crew member is well-equipped to handle the unpredictable and often harsh conditions they will encounter.

The Clipper Race offers a unique opportunity for individuals from all walks of life to engage in a once-in-a-lifetime adventure, testing their limits and forging unforgettable memories. As the race continues to inspire and challenge new generations of sailors, it remains a testament to human endurance and the spirit of exploration.

MAKING HISTORY!

For the first time in its 27-year history, the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race will be making a stop in Scotland when it sails to Oban in July on the penultimate leg of the 40,000 Nautical Mile journey.

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INTRODUCING THE CLIPPER 70S: THE VESSELS LEADING THE CHARGE IN OCEAN RACING



The Clipper 70s, the third generation of one-design Clipper Race yachts, made their impressive debut in the Clipper 2013-14 Race. These vessels, designed by renowned naval architect Tony Castro, have set new benchmarks in speed and performance, with yachts reaching an astonishing 35 knots.

Comprised of eleven 70-foot yachts, this fleet is the world's largest matched group of ocean racing yachts. These boats are the crown jewels of the Clipper Race, specifically built to withstand the gruelling demands of global ocean racing. Stripped of all luxuries, the Clipper 70s are designed with a focus on performance and efficiency. Crew members must quickly become adept at living in confined spaces and managing their gear in a streamlined environment.

Hull & Exterior

The hull construction utilises lessons learnt from previous races, employing well-proven composite construction materials and methods. The hull and deck are of a sandwich construction using glass fibre, epoxy resins, and structural foam. More commonly known as Foam Reinforced Plastic (FRP), this construction method is light, stiff, and proven to produce an incredibly strong and safe hull. Modern features have been included within the design, and along with the twin rudders, they provide improved directional stability when heeling, giving the helm more control and achieving a faster ride.

The deck layout provides a well-designed environment for the crew to perform in. Eleven Harken winches, including the primaries controlled by twin three-speed coffee grinders, swiftly bring the sails under control.

Jammers and organisers are located in easy-to-operate locations, allowing crew to quickly change settings. The mainsheet is placed further aft in the cockpit, permitting better communication between the crew during tacks, gybes, hoists, and drops. The aluminium mast towers 95 feet above the waterline and is rigged using tried and trusted materials and methods to further improve overall safety.

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Interior Design

The interior is stripped-out, featuring **24 bunks**, a state-of-the-art navigation station, and a simple galley.

Watertight bulkheads and doors are strategically located to provide compartmentalisation in case of flooding.



Placed towards the stern, the navigation station fosters a closer link between the navigator and helmsman. Equipped with the latest navigation electronics, computers, and satellite communications, this area offers an ideal workspace for the skipper and media crew member.

GRIB weather files will be analysed, courses mapped, and media content edited and sent to race headquarters using a powerful marine computer.



Mounted behind the companionway steps, the mid-ship position of the engine and generator increases hull stability and balance while keeping ancillaries and electrical components in one maintenance-friendly area.

Centrally located just aft of the mast, the simple horseshoe-shaped galley feeds into the communal area, where crew briefings and meal times occur. Crew accommodation runs from the stern forwards in a series of double bunks, stopping short of a watertight bulkhead towards the front third of the boat. Ahead of this is a large compartment for storing sails, with the main hatch located directly above.





Key features of the Clipper 70s include twin helms, twin rudders, and a six-foot bowsprit, allowing the use of three large asymmetric spinnakers and a suite of Yankee headsails. This setup significantly enhances both speed and performance. The new hull design improves control and performance, especially in the light winds encountered near the Equator or between weather systems during ocean crossings, while ensuring stability and safety in heavy conditions.



The boats are equipped with a state-of-the-art HD fixed camera system to capture all the action on deck. This footage is used by media outlets around the world to showcase the challenging conditions faced by the crew during the race.



Today's fleet represents a significant evolution from the original yachts used in the inaugural Clipper Round the World Yacht Race in 1996. By incorporating the best elements of previous designs—the Clipper 60s and Clipper 68s—the Clipper 70s set a new standard for ocean racing yachts, blending innovation with proven performance to meet the demands of modern ocean racing.





LIFE ON BOARD

Embarking on a Clipper 70 yacht journey is not for the faint-hearted or the work-shy. It's an exhilarating adventure that demands resilience, teamwork, and adaptability. Every crew member transforms into a vital cog in a self-sufficient machine, ready to tackle any challenge Mother Nature throws their way.

But it's not just about sailing; it's about becoming a jack-of-all-trades. Crew members will dive into roles like plumbing, electrical work, navigation, cleaning, IT, baking, sail repair, weather forecasting, and even basic medical care. Each watch is a well-oiled unit, with every member prepared to step into any role, ensuring double the hands on deck when the going gets tough.



Bowman: The Foredeck Daredevil

The Bowman reigns supreme on the foredeck, orchestrating high-stakes maneuvers with precision. This adrenaline-pumping role involves calling the distance to the start line and braving the harshest, wettest conditions. It's not just a job; it's an adventure in itself.

Mid Bowman: The Sail Maestro

Partnering with the Bowman, the Mid Bowman preps sails for hoisting and handles rapid sail changes. Picture yourself on a rollercoaster, with icy water splashing in your face – that's a day in the life of a Mid Bowman. Anticipation and agility are key as they sync with the cockpit crew and Bowman.

Mast Man: The Strong Link

The Mast Man is the powerhouse connector between the cockpit and the bow, hoisting sails and handling the heavy lifting. This role requires both muscle and brainpower to ensure seamless communication and flawless execution of commands.

Pit Man: The Team's Nucleus

At the heart of the crew is the Pit Man, managing the halyards and anticipating the needs of the Bowman, Mast Man, and Mid Bowman. With exceptional organizational skills and a calm demeanor under pressure, the Pit Man juggles multiple tasks with ease.



Grinder: The Engine Room

The Grinder is the crew's powerhouse, tirelessly trimming the sails with every wind shift and course alteration. Intense physical exertion is the norm, often leaving the Grinder with a flushed face after each tack. It's a role that requires relentless energy and strength.

Trimmer: The Precision Expert

Trimmers are the tactical minds, constantly fine-tuning the sails to maximize speed. They direct the Grinder and ensure the boat is always moving efficiently. In this role, focus is everything – a lapse can mean lost miles and precious time.

Running Backstay: The Guardian

The Running Backstay is crucial in balancing the pressure on the mast from the headsails. Perfect timing and precision are critical in this role, as a misstep could have dire consequences. It's a delicate dance of power and finesse.

Helmsman: The Navigator

The Helmsman is the boat's driver, maintaining a constant dialogue with the deck crew to anticipate and respond to every wave and wind shift. This role demands a blend of strength, a gentle touch, unwavering concentration, and forward-thinking anticipation.

Mother Watch: The Heartbeat

Every crew member takes a turn in the galley, cooking and cleaning in a space that never stops moving. Providing hearty, nutritious, and hot meals is vital for keeping spirits high. A well-fed crew is a happy, efficient crew, while poorly cooked meals can lead to slumped shoulders and lost momentum.

Watch Leaders: The Skipper's Lieutenants

Handpicked by the Skipper, Watch Leaders, along with their assistants, ensure that the crew executes the Skipper's tactics flawlessly. They keep the team focused and rotating through roles efficiently, always aiming for peak performance and maximum boat speed.

Life on a Clipper 70 is demanding, thrilling, and immensely rewarding. Each crew member embraces a multitude of roles and responsibilities, forging a tight-knit team ready to conquer the high seas.





Today we're looking through the OSC Window!

A huge thank you to the wonderful Irena for her incredible effort in crafting the splendid window display for Clipper Week at the ReStore charity shop on George Street. It's a must-see!

A big cheer as well to our Monday Mayhem members and volunteers who shared their amusing reasons for loving Oban Sailing Club. We particularly enjoyed

"I enjoy driving the powerboats. Steve, 45"

Your hard work, creativity, and entertaining contributions truly make our club shine!



Calling all juniors!

Great opportunity to watch the start of the Clipper Race from the water, thanks to a kind donation from Dave Sturrock and Seafari.

Only one Space Available, get in touch for details.

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OBAN SAILING CLUB



WASZP SCOTTISH CHAMPIONSHIPS RS400 TRAVELLER

Saturday 13th - Sunday 14th July
09:00 - onwards





MONDAY MAYHEM

15TH JULY

2PM - 9PM
BBQ AND BAR



Join us for the usual fun and excitement of Monday Mayhem!

If you've completed a sailing course with OSC, you're all set to dive in and participate.

Plus, thanks to extra support from RYA Scotland, we might have opportunities for those with less experience to get out on the water—weather permitting.

Don't miss out on the chance for some sailing thrills!

Event supported by RYA Scotland





OBAN SAILING CLUB



TALK AND SOCIAL NIGHT

Wednesday 17th July
Bar and Nibbles from 6pm
Talk starts around 7pm



OBAN PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

SPECTATOR & TURN UP EVENTS

12th to 16th July, North Pier Pontoon - Welcome The Clipper Race Fleet - 11 Clipper 70 Yachts arrive in Oban. [Track their arrival here.](#)

13th & 14th July, from 12pm, Dingy Park, **Oban Sailing Club** - WASZP Scottish Championships - exciting shore spectator opportunity as Oban Sailing Club hosts WASZP Scottish Championship.

14th July, 11am to 4pm, Dunstaffnage Castle Car Park - RYA Coastal Beach Clean - No need to book, just turn up. More info [here.](#)

15th July, 2pm to 9pm, **Oban Sailing Club - Monday Mayhem.** Join us for an extended Monday Mayhem, with support from RYA Scotland to get as many people on the water as we can (subject to weather, volunteers and experience)

15th to 19th July, 10am to 4pm, North Pier - Ocean Science Busking event. Dive into some of the latest advances in our understanding about the ocean: be inspired, amazed, and entertained by our students, researchers and conservationists.

16th July, from 6pm, **Oban Sailing Club** - Keel Boat Racing.

16th to 21st July, 9am to 5pm, North Pier - Clipper Race Fanzone - Learn about the Clipper Race, the world's toughest ocean challenge, and how you can get involved in the next race.

17th to 21st July, 10am to 4pm, Rockfield Centre - Food & Drink Village - Showcasing artisan produce from lochs, coasts, glens and islands of Argyll. Stalls include dairy, meat, seafood, preserves, baking, oils, chocolate, sauces, biscuits, tea, coffee and store cupboard staples, local gins, craft beer and spirits.

17th to 19th July, 2pm to 3.30pm, Corran Halls - Gaelic Taster Sessions - Gaelic Taster drop-in sessions. Fun, informal introduction to Gaelic words and phrases. No booking needed!

17th July, 1.00pm to 4.00pm, Cuan Mor - Chop for Charity Join Clipper Race crew for a haircut and/or beard trim with donations to UNICEF & The Little Princess Trust. No need to book.

18th July, 11am to 4pm, **Oban Sailing Club** - Autism on the Water. Free sailing trips for people on the autistic spectrum and their parents & carers on yacht "Confidence" including a "sail by" pass the Clipper Race fleet at the North Pier Pontoon. Enjoy activities for all ages in the clubhouse!





18th & 19th July, 10am to 6pm, North Pier Pontoon - Tour a Clipper 70 Racing Yacht - Bring the family and step on board a Clipper 70 stripped down ocean racing yacht. Take an above and below deck tour with the Race Crew that have called these yachts home for eleven months - Free and no need to book!

20th July, 3pm, from Black Lynn River (opposite Roxy's Restaurant), Rotary Annual Duck Race - Sponsor a duck for charity at Station Square from Friday 19th.

20th July, 1pm, Town Centre Beach - The Great Oban Bay Raft Race - Get a team, build a raft & compete! Register from 11.30am at Kwik Fit or The Royal Hotel or email obanandlornlions@gmail.com

20th July, 10am to 4pm, North Pier - RNLI Lifejacket Clinic & Water Safety stand.

21st July, 10.30am - Clipper Race crew are piped down to the North Pier Pontoons for the race start preparations.

21st July, Bid farewell to the Clipper Race!

10.30am - Crew Parade: Watch as the Clipper Race crew are piped down from Station Square to the North Pier for the Race Start preparations.

12pm to 12.30pm - Slipping the Line: Come and cheer on the 11 teams as they slip lines and commence preparations for the Parade of Sail from 12:00 pm to 12.30pm.

1pm, Parade of Sail - From Kerrera Marina across Oban Bay past Dunollie Lighthouse out to Dunstaffnage.

3pm Clipper Race Start: From Dunstaffnage.





THANK YOU!

We hope you've enjoyed this special Clipper Round the World Race edition of The Grumpy Commodore!

A big thank you to clipperroundtheworld.com for providing the information and photos.

Please enjoy the historic visit to Oban and support the club and town with their activities over the next couple of weeks.

We're always on the lookout for interesting content and pictures. Just get in touch!

GET INVOLVED

Join Our Team of Volunteers at OSC

Our club relies heavily on our volunteers, who are the driving force behind the numerous events and activities we host each year. We're constantly seeking new volunteers to lend a hand with a variety of tasks, such as:

Committee Members
Monday Mayhem
Bar Staff
Social Activities
Race Officials
Safety Boat
Shore Support
Social Media and Marketing
...and much more!

Whether you can commit to a one-time event or are looking to get involved on a regular basis, there is an opportunity for you to contribute. Please don't hesitate to reach out and get in touch!

I was sailing round the world simply because I bloody well wanted to – and, I realised, I was thoroughly enjoying myself.

Robin Knox-Johnston



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