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Dr Stuart Cox: Obituary

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This obituary was written by the Medway and Swale Boating Association after Stuart Cox's death in October 2016. His son, Robert Cox, has given permission for the obituary to be added to the Stuart Cox Archive, part of the 5BFTS Digital Archive.

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OBITUARY



**Dr Stuart Cox, MYC¹ Life Member, Commodore 1975-1976
Born April 1st 1923 – Died October 16 2016**

Stuart became interested in sailing when Oliver Fisher, MYC member, friend and fellow Queen's University graduate, invited him to go for a sail down the Medway. Soon after that he went for a holiday and bought a boat delivered to the quay at Broadstairs. It was an *Eleven Plus* and he named it *Pippin*. Stuart and son, Robert, rigged it by guesswork and launched it. They sailed down the coast and had a job getting back knowing nothing about sailing except what Stuart had read in a book bought at WH Smith's for ten shillings. They did not even have bungs in the buoyancy tanks and the centreboard was back to front.

Stuart and family all joined MYC in 1961. It was good policy to own a boat for a club class so he bought a *Swordfish*. First he bought an old decrepit boat while on holiday on the Norfolk Broads and towed it home. It was in very bad condition so soon bought a new boat from Fairey Marine who made *Swordfish* and named it *Pippin II*. The boat was delivered to Stuart by Peter Twiss, the test pilot.

Soon, Stuart became an excellent helm and so moved up the fleet until he often won.

After a few years he bought an *International Dragon* called *Val* and a year or two later a newer one called *Vega*, both boats he sailed very successfully with Robert, Dennis English

¹ Medway Yacht Club

and later Dick Bavister.

Stuart became involved in running the club, first, as chairman of the Entertainments Committee then in turn Rear, Vice and then Commodore in 1975 and 76 doing two years as each. Always a highly effective and efficient chairman, meetings were concise, never longer than needed and always leaving time to continue discussions in the bar.

Stuart, with his council contacts was instrumental in acquiring the extra land that the Club needed from APCM² who had always refused to sell. The council wanted a small part of the land for the car park behind the Arethusa Swimming Pool³. Stuart agreed to this on the proviso that the area reverted to the club when no longer required. He set up Life Memberships (10 times Annual Subs) to pay for the land. Since then, those that paid for them have paid no subscriptions. Now there may be only one such member left.

Stuart also set up of the Medway Yachting Association (now the Medway and Swale Boating Association) and it was his idea to link the RYA⁴ membership to clubs turning them from being hard up to a relatively wealthy organisation.

Born April 1st 1923, Stuart worked hard at school and passed matriculation at Selhurst Grammar School, an institution he tirelessly campaigned for, helping to keep grammars in Kent

Stuart joined the RAF in 1941 and trained as a pilot in Florida, returning to England and sent to gunnery school where he excelled in all aspects of flying including dive bombing.

He was 'Top Gun' flying Spitfires and P51 (Mustangs) and became Flight Lieutenant before promotion to Squadron Leader at Cranwell and leaving in 1946.

Stuart qualified as a doctor in 1953 at Queen's University, Belfast, then moving to Gillingham, very quickly becoming a partner in the practice. As a Batchelor of Obstetrics, he delivered many babies, one of which became a care nurse and looked after Stuart in his last days.

Stuart was a popular GP in Gillingham until retirement in 1980 only to embark on a career in local government becoming Leader of Gillingham Council, Leader of Kent County Council, Chairman of Kent Police Committee, Fire and Public Protection Committee and Medway Health Authority. It was at the last he saved the Wisdom Hospice⁵ project from collapse by allocating 1 million pounds from the budget to complete the build and keep it running to this day.

² Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers Ltd

³ In Rochester – now closed

⁴ Royal Yachting Association

⁵ In Rochester. The the only Adult Hospice for the areas of Medway and Swale