



For immediate release

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Darlington man sails away with top honours in Old Pulteney Maritime Heroes Awards

Inspiring sailing club volunteer takes top honours in Old Pulteney Maritime Heroes Awards

Darlington resident and devoted sailing club member David Clarke has been hailed the UK's most impressive 'maritime hero' after scooping the top prize in nationwide nautical competition, **The Old Pulteney Maritime Heroes Awards**.

David (55) was nominated by friends and colleagues at Ullswater Yacht Club, who paid tribute to the decades of service, hard work and enthusiasm he has contributed to build the success of the Club and the enjoyment of sailing for others, with all of his time and effort being offered on a voluntary basis.

His story won over the competition's panel of judges, which included the editor of Yachting Life Magazine and the Old Pulteney brand team, who unanimously picked David as the overall 2016 winner from a strong field of deserving entries and finalists from around the UK.

To reward and celebrate David's achievement, Old Pulteney presented him with a prize cheque for £1,000, a personalised crystal whisky decanter, and a bottle of Old Pulteney 21 Year Old, which was voted 'World Whisky of the Year' in 2012. As a finalist, David has already received a club prize of £1,000 to give to Ullswater Yacht Club, and a commemorative trophy.

This announcement concludes the fifth year of the annual Old Pulteney Maritime Heroes Awards, which were founded by 'The Maritime Malt' Old Pulteney to reward outstanding passion, commitment and achievement within Britain's sailing communities. Clubs were invited to nominate any members they felt deserved recognition within one of the following three categories: Club Service, Bravery or Sailing Achievement.

David was nominated in the **Club Service** category for his role as Centre Principal & Director of Ullswater Yacht Club, and for the outstanding level of commitment he has given to the



Club throughout his life, particularly for his work in setting up the thriving Ullswater Sailing School.

Ullswater Yacht Club was founded in 1958 and has established itself as one of the premier sailing clubs in the region, attracting members from all over the North of England. David first visited Ullswater Yacht Club as a child with his parents during holidays in the early 1970s, before joining as a teenager in 1975. He became a keen sailor, sailing all over the UK and competing regularly in events, as well as volunteering at both the 2011 Test Olympic Games and the 2012 London Olympics.

He first became involved with training at Ullswater Yacht Club in 2001, and organised courses for members for the next 11 years. In 2013 David led a team which developed a sailing school facility, where he serves as Principal, overseeing the training of more than 1200 people of all ages from local schools, scouts and community organisations, providing a tailored sailing experience from qualified instructors through the Royal Yachting Association scheme.

David continued to show his dedication to Ullswater Yacht Club in August last year, when 1,000 visitors took part in an event at the Club to celebrate Team GB's Olympic success in Rio, as part of the nation's biggest ever sports day. Throughout the day, David led a team of 21 volunteer instructors and helpers to provide free sailing taster sessions to more than 500 aspiring sailors. The taster sessions also included 17 visitors with limited mobility who were taken on the water in two special RYA Sailability boats, and David's efforts to keep the team motivated led to the day being a huge success.

David's history with the club is not only professional but personal too, as he met his wife Clare there whilst sailing when they were both teenagers. All three of their children, Alex, Edmund and Freya, grew up at Ullswater Yacht Club, and are now sailing instructors, continuing the volunteering tradition, just like their father.

David is delighted with his win and commented: *'I am thrilled to win the Old Pulteney Maritime Heroes Awards. It is an honour, although the win is really in recognition of all our member volunteers who have worked so hard to make the Sailing School so successful, and Ullswater Yacht Club such a great club.'*

Ullswater Yacht Club Commodore Peter Lewis said: *'As Ullswater Yacht Club enters a challenging time we are very proud that David has received this award for all his work to establish and develop Ullswater Sailing School. We are looking forward to an exciting future for the Club and I am sure that the school will go from strength to strength with the leadership of our own 'maritime hero.'*



Margaret Mary Clarke, Old Pulteney Senior Brand Manager added: *‘Each year, our hope with these awards is to uncover and celebrate some of the unsung heroes of the maritime world, from sailing communities right across the UK. In David we have found yet another truly worthy winner, and we are delighted to see him take this year’s top prize. David’s efforts and dedication to sailing and to Ullswater Yacht Club and Sailing School epitomise the spirit of the awards and have made such a positive impact on so many people over the years. Our congratulations go to him for all that he and his Club have achieved.’*

**For further information, please contact Lisa Fox at Burt Greener
Communications: 0131 220 0003 / lisa@burtgreener.co.uk**

Old Pulteney Single Malt Scotch Whisky

Old Pulteney is one of the world’s finest and most distinctive single malt Scotch whiskies. Known as ‘The Maritime Malt’, it is crafted in the windswept coastal town of Wick, home to the Pulteney Distillery which is one of the most northerly on the Scottish mainland. The distillery was established in 1826 in the heart of ‘Pulteneytown’, the town created to house fishermen during Wick’s famous herring boom which once drew a fleet of over 1000 boats and 7000 workers to this remote and rugged harbour. Old Pulteney is the embodiment of this place, its people and its remarkable history. The skilled Pulteney Distillery team continues to craft whisky using the most traditional and time-honoured techniques that most others have long abandoned. This includes the uniquely shaped Pulteney stills, which are reflected in the design of the Old Pulteney bottle on shelves today.

Matured in hand-selected oak casks, the resulting whisky has been acclaimed for its excellence, its smooth drinking style and faint hint of the sea. Old Pulteney’s 21 Year Old Single Malt holds the coveted title of ‘World Whisky of the Year’ for 2012 in Jim Murray’s Whisky Bible – one of the industry’s highest accolades. The whisky also achieved top ten status in the UK single malt market in 2012 and is flourishing in many other countries around the world. 2016 saw Old Pulteney 1989 Vintage crowned the ‘World’s Best Single Malt’ at Whisky Magazine’s prestigious World Whiskies Awards, while parent company International Beverage celebrated a momentous win in Whisky Magazine’s Icons of Whisky Scotland 2017 awards, after being crowned Whisky Distiller of the Year.