



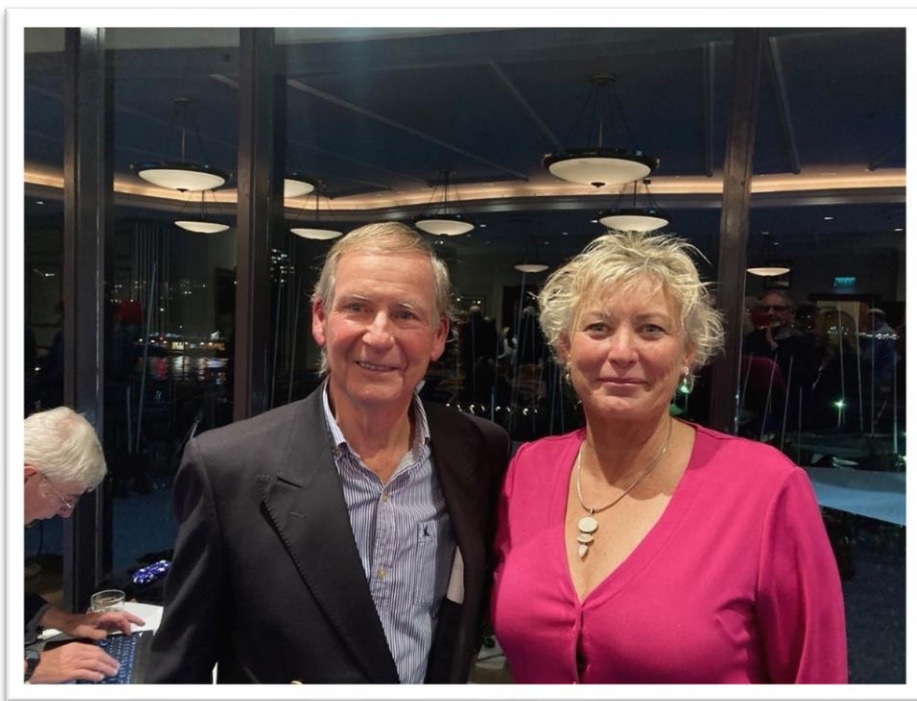
'The Clipper Races with Wendy Tuck'

A presentation by Wendy Tuck, 28 June 2023

Report by Stephen Thomas

Wendy Tuck inspired a magnificent turnout to hear her speak about her sailing achievements on a very cold June evening with 111 attending and over 100 staying for dinner afterwards.

Wendy was born in Western Sydney, a considerable distance from the ocean, and fell in love with surfing rising at 4.00 am to catch the train to the beach.



Wendy started sailing in her 20s when she and her then-husband, living in Spain, bought a small twin-keeled sailing boat. Returning to Australia, she started sailing in Sydney on an old wooded classic. She later graduated to other yachts but primarily with Jeff Lavis on *UBS Wild Thing*.

Bored working for a travel agent she qualified as a sailing instructor working for a large Sydney Charter Company but could not get any time off to compete in the Sydney to Hobart yacht race so she resigned and has now completed 15 Sydney to Hobart yacht races, the last two in the two-handed division.

She continued to pursue her sailing credentials obtaining her Master 5 and Medical Level 3 certificates, and is a Sea Safety Survival course instructor.



Wendy was then offered a position as a Clipper skipper in the 2015-16 race sailing *Da Nang Vietnam*, had two podium finishes and ended up 7th overall. It was in this race that they were knocked down in the North Pacific and Wendy was knocked unconscious and suffered broken ribs.

Wendy was then asked to return for a second Clipper Race and despite advice to the contrary, accepted, and was allocated *Sanya Serenity Coast*. The crew on each Clipper yacht is made up of a professional skipper (in this case Wendy Tuck) and amateurs who undergo 4 weeks of training and pay to sail the full distance called “worlders”, or crew who would sail one or more legs called “leggers”. Wendy says she was very fortunate as she had 8 crew who completed the whole circumnavigation and the remaining 60 were leggers. This team gelled from the start and everyone pitched in to help. Even the partners of the crew who greeted the arrival in each port helped to prepare the boat for the next leg.



Photo: OnEdition

The Clipper Race is 40,000nm and is made up of a number of legs.

1. Liverpool UK the first leg is to Punta del Este in Uruguay.



In this leg *Sanya* stated very well and was first boat into Punta Del Este but was relegated to second after Greetings was awarded redress and gained first place.

2. Punta Del Este to Capetown SA.

Sanya finished mid fleet after an uneventful leg.

3. Capetown to Fremantle WA

Sanya elected to sail offshore on this leg while the majority of the fleet stayed closer to the coast. Unfortunately one of the yachts grounded which led to some significant rule changes. These changes included penalties for going closer to shore than the 30 meter contour. The race was marred in the southern ocean by the death of Simon Spears and the organisers added a first mate to the crew ensuring a professional sailor was on watch at all times. Another issue which sprang up was concern about a forestay fitting and the race organisers restricted the boats to a No.3 headsail when the breeze was over 25 knots apparent.

Sanya gained a significant lead by being offshore but this evaporated when they fell into a hole for some days.

4. Fremantle to Sydney NSW followed by Rolex Sydney to Hobart race and then Hobart to Airlie Beach QLD.

This leg was a triumph for Wendy and *Sanya* as they were first into Wendy's home port of Sydney and followed this up by a win in the Sydney to Hobart race. On the leg to Airlie Beach, *Sanya* had mainsail problems and incurred a penalty for going over the 30-metre contour.

5. Airlie Beach to Sanya and then to Qingdao, China

6. Qingdao to Seattle USA

These legs were made difficult by the myriad of fishing boats in the South China Sea. There was a wall of South Korean fishing boats with limited manoeuvrability due to the trolling nets.

7. Seattle to Panama followed by Panama to New York City USA



Transiting Panama Canal was interesting as they would have to wait till three boats had arrived so they could transit the canal together due to the number of cargo ships using the canal. While waiting red-footed boobies would perch on the boat totally unafraid of the crew.

8. NYC to Derry (Londonderry) NI followed by a final sprint from Derry to Liverpool UK.

This is where the race was heating up. The points were *Sanya* 137, *Seattle* 123 and *Qingdao* 123. The winner of the sprint from Derry to Liverpool would win the overall race and Seattle had not played the Joker card (double points) and it is a Le Mans start. i.e. cut engines one minute before the start, hoist sails and start racing. Fortunately, *Sanya* was well enough placed and won the overall round-the-world race by 4 points. A triumph.

Wendy's next project was skipper of the newly refurbished maxi yacht *Maiden* on a fundraising voyage from Fremantle to Tokyo raising awareness of education for women

She is currently operations manager for the Making Waves Foundation which provides sailing programs for young people with disabilities. She is also preparing for the 2023 Sydney to Hobart race in the two-handed division.

It was obvious from the presentation that Wendy has outstanding leadership qualities with the ability to mould a diverse group of people from many nationalities into a cohesive team.

Stephen Thomas