



## Obituary - John Piper

John Piper was born in Wallasey, Cheshire on 19th August 1934, the eldest of five children including two sets of twins. John's father was tragically killed in France in 1940 at just 33 years of age and John was thrust into a position of responsibility at an early age helping to raise his



younger siblings. The family moved to the Isle of Man a place which John remembered fondly. At 18 he joined the Merchant Navy, sending money home to support his family. He worked for the Blue Funnel line and rapidly rose through the ranks to become a Master Mariner. He regularly spoke of enjoying life at sea, with many interesting and amusing stories from visiting ports from around the world, especially the jazz bars of New Orleans, sparking a life-long love of jazz. Whilst captaining vessels he always travelled with his cherished sailing dinghy and loved sailing round the various ports he visited.

John met Maisie whilst visiting Glasgow and they were married on 10th August 1963, being happily married for 62 years. Two children, Fiona and Nick and subsequently four grandchildren, made up his little family. Following the marriage, John transitioned to life ashore, getting a teaching qualification and achieving a BA in Mathematics, Computing and Technology.

His shore-based career started as a lecturer at HMS Worcester on the Thames, before later being appointed as a Senior Lecturer at the Nautical College in Fleetwood. The family moved from Chislehurst, Kent to Lytham St Annes on the Fylde Coast and John embraced the opportunity to share his love of sailing with his family and friends, being

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a member of Lytham Yacht Club and later Blackpool and Fleetwood Yacht Club.

Alongside teaching navigation and meteorology, John passed on his love of sailing through running RYA masters sailing courses and wrote the bestselling book “Come Sailing” to accompany the BBC series of the same name.

John had a remarkable ability to fix and build just about anything; he even took on the ambitious project of fitting out the hull of a yacht, to create Mahjong, a much-loved family sailing boat. He later upgraded to a 32ft yacht, berthed at Largs in Scotland where he, his family and friends enjoyed many holidays and long weekends sailing round the Western Isles of Scotland.

John joined the Catenian Association Blackpool Circle in April 1987 and was president of that Circle in 1996/1997. In their retirement John and Maisie enjoyed many holidays around the world, including many enjoyable holidays chartering yachts with friends and family in the Mediterranean. John and Maisie moved to Knutsford where John joined Knutsford Catenian circle and was a very active member of the Circle, including being social secretary for many years.

In his later years John had to wear a hearing aid and made a few (very polite) comments that he was struggling to hear people at the Circle meetings. This led to the Circle purchasing a loop system which John very much appreciated, as did other brothers and visitors who use hearing aids. In his later years John suffered from arthritis and although he never complained this ended his sailing days. Not to be outdone, and in true stoic style, he opted for a double hip replacement having both hips replaced on the same day!

John was a real gentleman who always loved to hear your stories and thoughts and made everyone feel special in his presence. He will be sadly missed by his family and many friends.

MAY HE REST IN PEACE