

# **THE HISTORY OF WESTON SAILING CLUB**

1952 to 1977

Compiled

By Barbara Hutton

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## Introduction

A few years ago Derek Ide suggested that I write a history of Weston Sailing Club. There had been a short outline history written for the Hampshire Magazine in 1968 by Jim Warren when he was the club Publicity Officer, but it gave few details of the development of the Club, the people involved or the successes and failures. At this time I was the club Publicity Officer and as we were almost twenty-one years old, it seemed appropriate to enlarge on Jim's outline, collecting together the facts relating to the growth of the Club before memories faded or records were lost. Little did I realise what I had let myself in for.

I have spent many hours reading through those records that were available and have talked to members past and present trying to piece together the story of Weston S.C. Roger Holmes kindly lent me some notes that he had written in the early '60<sup>1</sup>s on the beginnings of the Club and also his copies of 'Gybe-Ho<sup>1</sup>', the club magazine from 1961-61), both of which I have quoted from extensively. Eric McGill, Bill O'Brien, Ivan and Prank Morris, Gordon Henry and Ken Andrew all wrote material for me, Larry Marks lent me his press cuttings and the Fleet Captains looked up their records. Alan Haggard read through the first very rough draft and provided more information.

The 21st. year came and went without even the first draft being finished, but everyone I spoke to seemed interested and encouraged me to carry on. I have worked on it intermittently over the last three years until there is now a relatively complete record of the first 25 years.

The following is therefore what seems to me to have been important in our history. I have arranged the material in subjects rather than as a straight chronological account of the growth and development of the Club, as it seemed easier to follow one theme at a time. I hope the stated facts are correct, but one must necessarily interpret what is available and if this has led to errors I apologise and hope that those who can correct them will please do so.

Barbara Hutton - December 1976



'Storm' in 1946/7 The old Seaweed Hut in background



'Storm' in 1955 after extensive reconstruction & a change to Bermuda rigging

## Chapter One - The Founding

For some time Ivan Morris had been toying with the idea of starting a sailing club on Weston Shore, primarily to provide a base from which to work on a 32\* naval cutter called "Storm" of which he was a joint owner, and to store the gear when she was hauled up on the beach. Although living locally it was still a problem transporting all the bits and pieces home. Ivan mentioned it to his co-owners, brother Frank, Don Harvey and A. McDonald and found that they approved of the idea; also a few other boat owning friends were interested. Nothing was actually done until one evening Ivan and Frank were together at Ivan's house with a newcomer to the district, Bill O'Brien, who had soon shown his enthusiasm for boats and joined the group of local working men who spent their spare time messing about in boats' on the Weston Shore. Bill had previously been an active member of several sailing clubs, both at home and abroad, and was able to provide information on the organisational side, so during that evening's chat about boats a definite decision was taken to form 'Weston Sailing Club'.

A meeting was arranged for those interested and on 11<sup>th</sup> January 1952 at the Sun Hotel, Weston Lane, and our club was formally founded

'.... for the encouragement of Shallow Draught, and Small Boat sailing, and Racing, at the Weston Shore, in the County Borough of Southampton.'

(W.S.C. Rule Book 1954)

A Committee was elected with Commodore - G.W. Powell; Vice-Commodore -E. French; Rear-Commodore - Capt., T.C. Broad; Chairman - W.J. O'Brien; Hon Sec. - V.J. Harvey; Hon Treas. - L.C. Wilkinson. Ivan and Frank Morris were, of course, founder members and also the late Bert Drought, a longshoreman who was one of "Storm's" crew, the late Leo Lines, a boat builder by trade who unable to work because of ill health had time to assist with plans, Des O'Prey, Jack Allen, Harry Critchley, George Grey and Phil Cozens, skipper of a J Class racing yacht.

The founding was noted in the press as 'Southampton's latest yachting venture'. With no club house.

'...the Sun Hotel in Weston Lane was to be the temporary headquarters; .... Membership was open to either boat owners or non-boat owners and new members of either sex were welcome.'

(Southern Evening Echo 1952)

Soon with the help of Councillors Boyle and Mitchell, Southampton Council agreed to rent a space for a pound on the shore near the old Rolling Mills. Fencing was purchased and erected by the members, and an old Anderson air-raid shelter put in the pound to store the various bits of gear and on occasion to give protection to members in bad weather. A slip-way and starting platform were made and the club could start racing. Harry Cozens was the first O.O.D.



Weston Sharpie being built in back garden 1952



Two of the new fleet of Weston Sharpies W3 'Lily' & ?



In its' first season the new club took over the organisation of the sailing events in the Woolston Regatta, this was probably the first WSC Open Meeting. The Regatta was actually sailed on 20th July 1952, a week later than scheduled, as strong winds had forced a postponement. Another possible difficulty in the first two years was that the stretch of water had to be shared with the flying boats of Aquila Airways, who used it as their runway. Alan Haggard remembers how the Harbour Master's launch would come speeding into the fleet shouting to them to get out of the way, then suddenly there would be one of the flying boats just above them, ready to land and taxi round to the pier. Two present members were working for the airline at the time, Pam Whitfield as a hostess and future husband Ron as a pilot. Ron cannot recall any near misses this end, although he was once instructed to circle round at Maderia until a race had finished.

Some of the founder members were owners of Weston Sharpies, a 14' chine dinghy, carvel built. It was immediately adopted as the Club's class boat and had the second largest entry in the 1952 Woolston Regatta. Leo Lines was the designer and he built the first two, W1 named "Ivy" for Bert Drought, which Bert got going so well that he usually managed to lead the class round the marks, and in one S.V.S.A. meeting at Calshot, easily beat all the boats taking part, despite a heavy wind that deterred some helmsmen from going afloat. W2 was nicknamed "Yellow Peril", and was owned by Sid Butterworth. During the first few years of the Club several new members bought or built Weston Sharpies, W3 "Lily" was bought from Leo Lines by Alan Haggard, Roger Holmes had W4, Les Harris W7, the only Sharpie to be made in plywood. Luke Wilkinson, a boat builder by trade made one in Mahogany and finished it beautifully. Bill O'Brien also owned a Sharpie, as well as R. Godwin, Gordon Harvey and the Kennedy brothers. W1 and W5 changed hands within the Club and were then sailed by Jack Russell and Ray Woodley. Weston Sharpies sailed well and were good stable family boats; they were usually kept on moorings as they were heavy to pull out of the water, and Ray remembers that those kept on land leaked badly and the crew had to bail for most of the race, until they 'took up'.

In those first seasons there was a great variety of boats in the Club, the Commodore and the Vice-Commodore owned cruisers, then there was the Morris brothers<sup>1</sup> "Storm", the naval cutter that had started it all. "Storm" became the centre of club activities, acting as rescue boat, towing dinghies to S.W.S.A. meetings and ferrying younger members on outings. Among the dinghies were a Merlin Rocket, sailed by Keith Paul, two Hornets and four Fleetwinds, one sailed by Larry Marks and his fiancée Judy. Larry remembers how he and Judy sailing the Fleetwind in an S.W.S.A. meeting at Marchwood, capsized at the mouth of the King George V dock just as the gates were opening, they had the speediest rescue he can recall and were towed away by the Harbour Master's launch.

By 1954 some members were looking for a lighter boat than the Weston Sharpie, one that was a high performance dinghy that could be hauled up into the pound; but they were not satisfied that a class existed to suit the requirements and at a meeting decided that members should submit designs for a new boat. At the end of May 1954 Bill O'Brien sent in the plans of a Daring and it was subsequently accepted by the Committee.



The Mayor and Mayoress inspect Daring class dinghy Rastus, owned and built by the 15-year-old Morris twins, of Woolston, Designer Bill O'Brien is on the left

**If the 'something' about boats gets you this is for you**

If you have never thought of a boat of your own; if gleaming marine varnish has never won your heart; if your nose has never twitched to the smell of rope and smart paint, go along to J Baker and Co., Ltd., the Southampton outfitters, this week.

If ever a show was calculated to stir the out-and-about spirit of winter-weary landmen, to conjure up visions of white sails on the blue water and put a gay sea change on the face of things, this is it.

Here are boats and canoes, a dozen of them with prices pruned down to practical dimensions. There are sailing dinghies, run-abouts, catamarans and rowing dinghies, all from yards near Southampton and all pretty inexpensive.

Sails, gear, flags and clothing are included in the show, spread over 1800 square feet of floor space at Baker's East-street store. As extra eye catchers are fascinating scale model craft by Southampton modellers.

The show - it goes on until April 5 - was launched on Saturday by the Mayor, Alderman R.R.H Hammond OBE, JP. Praising the idea of a spring boat show right in the heart of the town, he said the event would help put East street, somewhat underestimated as a shopping centre, back on the map.

**Cheque for IYR**

Standing by as the Mayor spoke was Sceptre skipper Stan Bishop. He will be talking about the yacht on various evenings while the show runs. It stays open until 8 pm.

A cheque was handed to the Mayor, by a director of Baker's, Mr Frank Wilson, to aid the town's International Youth Rally funds.

The show is the result of hard work since January by area manager Mr F.W. Witton and shipping manager Mr H.W. Gladwin, helped by assistant manager Mr E.D. Wenborn.

They set to and cleared the upstairs showroom, organised layout of stands and displays, and invited local firms to take part.

Bakers' themselves have a fine display of the sailing clothing for which they are well-known among yachtsmen.

Cheapest boat on show? It is a 9ft. chine rowing or outboard powered dinghy, complete with oars and rowlocks, price £38 ex-works from Marine Services Ltd. at Hythe.

**Twins build dinghy**

The famed KittyKat catamaran by Blundell's Boat Services of Havant is there, available either complete or in kit form, on monthly payments.

Ian Proctor, present at the show on Saturday, has a display of his now world-famous light alloy dinghy masts.

Bill O'Brien was there too and shown was one of his designs, a nimble 14-foot Daring dinghy, built by 15-year-old twin boys in six months. The Daring pioneered at Weston Sailing Club, is gaining in popularity.

The young builders are Jeffrey and David Morris, of Archery Grove, Woolston, and their boat is called Rastus.

Moody's of Swanwick have sent along, as an example of their renowned craftsmanship, a nine-foot clinker-built dinghy. She costs £81.



The Daring was a 14'3" dinghy built of plywood, beam 4'8" with a sail area of 140 sq.ft. It had built-in buoyancy and a self-draining cockpit, and trapeze for the crew, although Roger Holmes commented that its flare of 6'6" maximum allowed it to be sailed without this Accessory\*. It was a cheap boat, less than £80 ready to sail, easy to build and performed well particularly when planing, it

'.... proved easier to sail than expected, except for the occasional ducking which seemed common to the class.\*

(Gybe-Ho 1961)

It was even possible for 13 year olds to handle although their legs weren't long enough to reach the deck, admittedly they were three up and being the Morris twins and Colin Steele were no novices. Bill O'Brien's D1 was bought by Keith Paul, who spent evening after evening sailing up and down the shore teaching himself the finer techniques. Larry Marks built D2, Ken Ploughman had D3, Jeff Morris DU, T. Maughan D£. When Larry went into the Army he sold D2 to Wilf Cropp, who subsequently sold it to Roger Holmes. After a slow start other clubs showed interest and by 1959, 56 copies of the plans had been sold and a class Association formed and recognised by the R.Y.A. Bill gave the copyright of the plans to Weston S.C. and after protracted correspondence a written agreement was drawn up whereby royalties were charged on completed hulls, of which half went to the Daring Association and half to Weston S.C. No Darings remain in the area now, but in 1974 I had an enquiry from an owner of one in Leeds, asking who would have records of individual boats.

Bill O'Brien was also designing catamarans and in 1955 produced the Jumbahead, this was a hard chine design to suit amateur builders, 16' long, beam 7'6", and a sail area of 167 sq.ft. There was more interest in multihulls about then and in the autumn some high speed trials were held off the shore over a 1/2 mile course; Alan Haggard and Jack Russell acted as time keepers. The Jumbahead took part and also a Shearwater 11, an 18' catamaran designed and sailed by Roland and Francis Prout, a trimaran designed by Dr. Morwood (founder of the Amateur Yacht Research Society) and sailed by Ivan Morris, and a Tornado designed by Tiff a Pox. The Shearwater 11 proved to be the fastest, despite at one point the helmsman forgetting that he was 'driving\* two hulls and wrapping one round a mark!

Several Jumbaheads were built and the class was adopted by Weston. Unfortunately there are no records of the activity or numbers in the class until 1958 when an Open Meeting was held in the September. This became an annual fixture and was the Southern Area Championships in 1961 and '63, and the National Championships in 1962. There is a little information about the arrangements, but infuriatingly nothing on what actually happened. The class had a following of enthusiasts in the Club, reaching a peak in 1960 of a fleet of 13, from then on the class secretary had to remind members that

'.... so far this season the Jumbahead class has shown a distinct lack of activity with the notable exception of "Moggy", J. Adams, who always seems to be disappearing in a cloud of spray, and Mr. Dempster.'

(Gybe-Ho 1962)



Daring 7 owned by John Walters



Bob Steele & Bob Daking sailing Daring



Bob Steele & Jeff Dicks buoyancy testing a Daring 1954 (30 minutes each side)

D. Roberts, owner of "White Rogue" was keen enough to travel from London each weekend, other active members of the fleet were Pat Dempster, R. Trowbridge and J. Morris.

In 1962 the Mark 2 Jumbahead was launched, and was described as having a

'.... most attractive appearance, and by the spray soaked crew, as - the only planing submarine - so that the claim of 18 knots and bone dry did not apply any more...'

(Gybe-Ho 1962)

The following season there was a re-think on classes and the Jumbahead as a class at Weston S.C, is not mentioned again. However, Jumbaheads remained on Southampton Water because a fleet built up at Petters S.C. By this time Bill O'Brien was still designing 'Cats' but had moved on to the big cruising variety.

## Chapter Two – Expansion

To return to 1955, the Club was in its third season, and the number of members was increasing, particularly those under 21. The Committee realised that it was necessary to adopt more classes to suit the variety of sailing abilities and asked the Sailing Committee to recommend three new classes for the 1956 season. Roger Holmes was the Sailing Secretary at the time and he wrote about the deliberations.

'We duly met and armed with many specifications, reports, photographs, also many cups of tea we set to work.'

The choices were narrowed down to the Yachting World G.P.1L). and the News Chronicle Enterprise for a general purpose class. Roger continued.

'Both were adopted although we felt that too many classes would be a bad thing for racing. This problem has tended to solve itself as the Enterprise seemed to appeal to more owners....

For the young members it was decided to adopt the Yachting World Cadet, which has since gained international status. One of these dinghies was built by the Club for the cadets and others soon appeared. The choice of a new racing boat demanded great care and consideration. It had to fulfil important conditions, it had to be National or International, it must be rightable after a capsize and of course must be modern and fast.'

The eventual decision was to adopt the International 50\$, then two years old, which fulfilled all the conditions. There were voices against, as no 505's had been seen on Southampton Water, but Roger adds...

'We have since been able to allay all fears.'

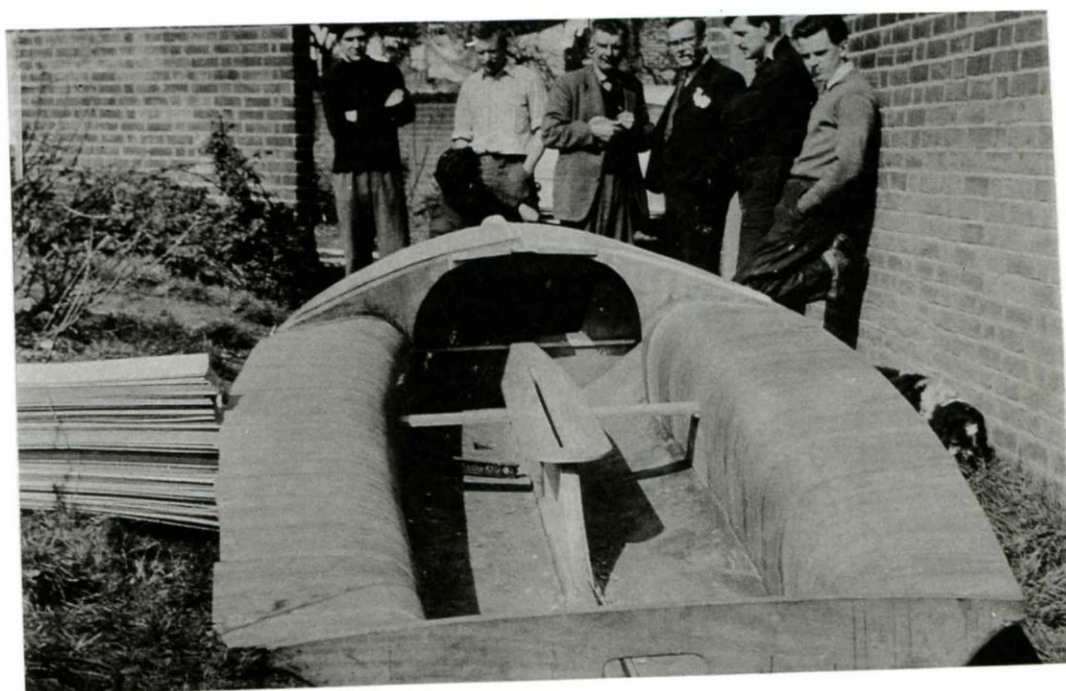
It was one thing to decide to adopt a class but quite another to bring the fleet into being. At that time it was less usual to buy a boat ready to sail, one expected to build it oneself and as several were wanted at the same time, those interested began to discuss ways and means. Bill O'Brien suggested the possibility of building a number of boats as a group scheme, this seemed feasible and had the attraction of lowering the cost per boat (which in the end came out at £55!) • A meeting was called when the pros and cons of group building were thoroughly discussed, a dozen members were definitely interested in becoming 505 owners and so the Weston 505 syndicate was started. Roger was one of the syndicate and continued the story.

'We resolved to hold a further meeting at the house of Alan Haggard where a derelict building stood that might be turned into a boat shed. The problem of where to build was a major one at this time. We all repaired to Alan's the next weekend (October 1956) and over cups of tea provided by his wife Betty, we discussed the organisation and details...





The 'Boat Shed' (ex Stables) in Alan haggar's garden



One of the completed hulls. Keith Stout, Les Harris, Andy Stout, Alan Haggar, Reg May & Bob Steele; Bill O'Brien kneeling

The question of premises had to "be solved before anything could begin. I am now convinced that we were carried away by sublime optimism concerning the shed as it was to be called. This building had started life as a stable with living accommodation above but it had been gutted by fire and now stood a blackened ruin two stories high with cracked walls and gaping windows. The ground floor contained the old stalls and was four feet deep in rubble and weeds. The floor above sagged on its rotten joists and threatened to fall at any moment, the stairs were immediately the scene of an amusing incident as one of us trying to ascend fell through the first step. It was obvious that to be of any use the building would have to be gutted and some sort of roof erected. We cheerfully agreed that this could be done and returned to' the fireside to discuss the details.'

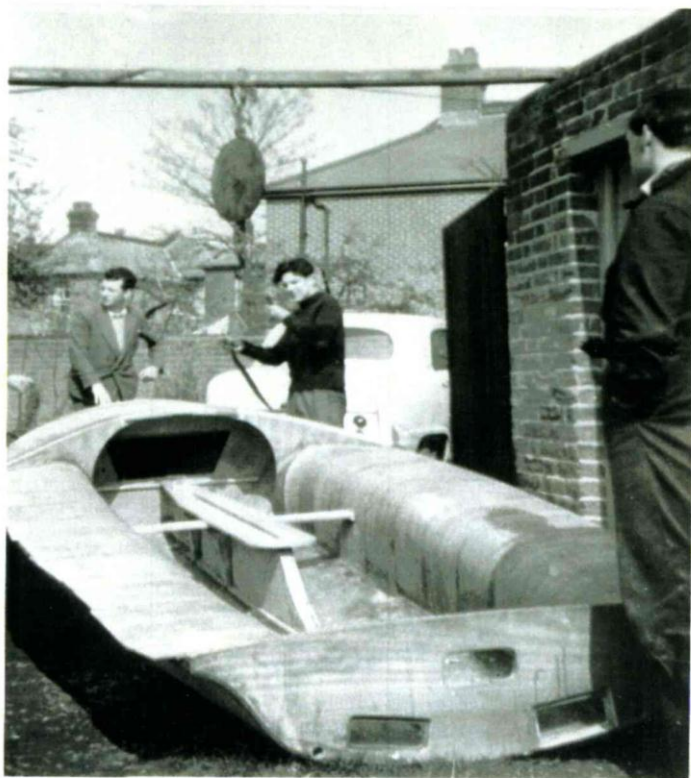
Money of course was needed before building could begin and after estimating costs and the time likely to elapse before completion, it was reckoned that, an amount of 15>/- per week would be necessary; those able to do so put down a sum there and then. Roger goes on

'We argued for some time on the method of building the boats and it was tentatively agreed to divide the work between us in the following way; which will allow me to introduce the members of the building association by name. Bill O'Brien was to build masts. Those living in Woolston were to build shells and to fit out the boats as the shells were finished, these were Alan Haggard, Leslie Harris, Andy Stout and his son Keith, Bob Steele and myself. The others living at the other side of Southampton, Bob and Peter Button, Reg May and Roy Ironside were to make components such as centre-boards, transoms, etc. and last but by no means least, Cliff Seale was to make fittings. Cliff was assigned this task as by trade he is an instrument maker and lives in Basing-stoke. Cliff was the only example of the cobbler at his last as the rest of us had occupations of great variety but of no connection with woodwork or small boat building.. The plan had to be modified later in the light of experience, but with this organisation our object was to build twelve shells, fitting out each one as it was completed and storing this in a store we rented until all were complete when lots would be drawn to decide the ownership of each boat. One boat was to be finished early on in 1957 and to be sold in order to cover the initial heavy expenses.'

One was finished, and sold to Delmar Morgan of Warsash, who immediately took it to the £05 National Championships and won.

'To Alan fell the job of organising delivery of moulds, ordering of veneers, timber, staple guns, (these became a rude word) staples and a hundredweight of araldite glue. We were to use over 2,000 veneers and half a million staples J Very late when most of the initial details had been settled we ended the meeting and arranged to attack the boat shed at the weekend.'

Work started with demolition and clearing inside the 'boat shed', followed by the construction of a roof, which according to Roger



Peter Sutton & Keith Stout weighing a 505 hull



Sailing at last. 'Silver Blaze' Roger Holmes' first 505



Would have made Heath Robinson green with envy and after the first heavy rain needed makeshift repairs to an already makeshift Job. But nothing daunted, with one mould lent by Don Forster of Hayling Island and one bought, they started building as the -first transom arrived from the 'components group'<sup>1</sup>. Helpful advice, suggestions and cheering comments from the 505 Association kept them going in their darkest hours.

After nearly two years hard work the boats were finished. Bill O'Brien's the second one completed, was 12 lb. overweight and broke the sling when being weighed - it was a makeshift sling - he was disgusted, Keith Paul bought it eventually. Alan Haggard's was the last to be finished and by this time the syndicate builders had disappeared from the building site, with the exception of Andy and Keith " Stout, who stayed and helped. Alan also sold his boat after a short time, to Mr Gravestock, as he had less time for sailing. The rest were sailed by their original owners and founded the Weston 505 fleet. Roger, who had appointed himself overseer of all the boats, went out for his first trip, sailed past the club house, stuck his feet under the toe straps, lent back and went straight over the side - the toe straps had not been attached!

Other members were interested in 505\*s by this time, Larry Marks for one; he had just finished his military service and was ready to sail regularly. Larry bought a Fairey Marine hull and finished it himself creating "Muchacha" - K869, the first of his personal fleet. By the A.G.M. 1958 "the Sailing Secretary was able to report.

'.... with a probable 18 boats the 505 would be the largest club fleet of the class in the country,'

(Minute Book 26.11.58)

Five years later the following comments were written in Gybe-Ho...

'The 505 building syndicate should have been long forgotten, but it seems to have a very lasting effect. Many of the syndicate who dedicated two years of hard labour to serving the rest of the syndicate, continuously bring up memories of those eventful days. Most of the boats have now changed hands several times but like the bad penny they keep on turning up. Several are now at Christchurch, and sailing regularly. Cliff Seale\*s boat still looks like new, with the original coat of paint, and it's not polyester either. Roger's original 505 "Silver Blaze" is now for sale in London, still dearer than its original cost. Rumour had it that Roger is buying another 505 I have now lost count of how many boats he has had, but it must be a record. '

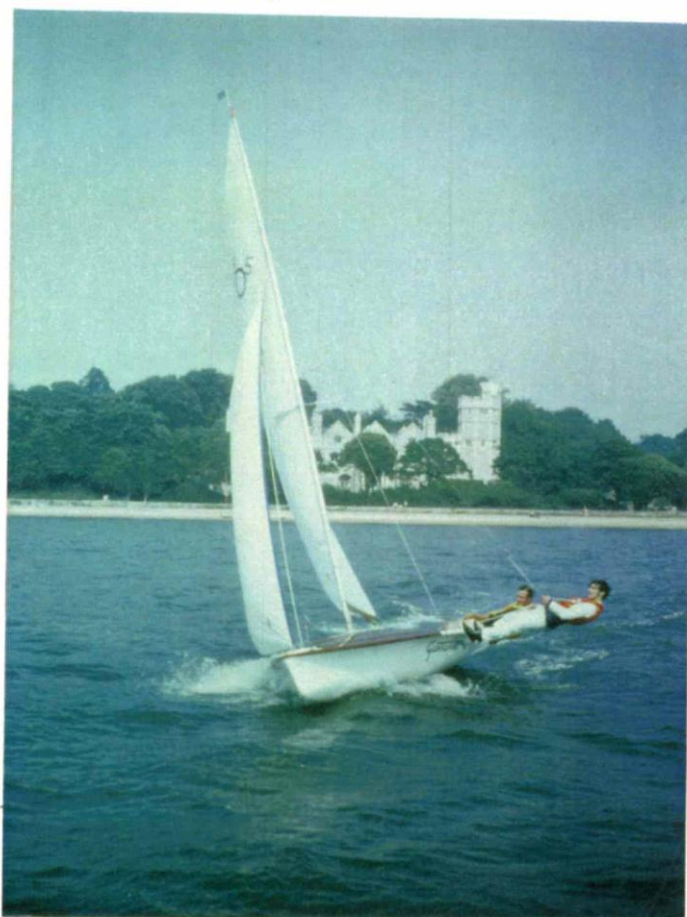
(Gybe-Ho 1962)

From the beginning there was a high standard of racing in the 505 fleet, particularly by Keith Paul and Larry Marks, Keith usually leading and closely followed by Larry with the rest somewhere behind. These two, often supported by club mates, soon joined the 505 travellers and their successes at Open Meetings and Championships in the next few years, helped enormously to publicise Weston S.C. and 'put it on the map' of the sailing fraternity, both National and International. At the first Weston 505 Open Meeting in April 1959.





Keith Paul & his trophies with members of WSC 505 fleet  
Left to Right Roger Holmes, K P, David Curtis, Clive Easter,  
Bob Steele & Larry Marks



Peter & David Buttigieg tuning up 'Gunrunner'

## Chapter Three – 505 Comings and Goings

It is worth digressing at this point to record something of the journeyings and successes of members of the 505 fleet, those of Larry Marks and Keith Paul make impressive reading.

In 1960 Keith, still in the Cadet section at Weston S.C. and in his third season of sailing 505's, won the National Championships held at Brixham, by consistent sailing under all conditions. Also during that week there was a North v South team race, it started in an already fresh wind and the report continued

'.... it suddenly increased to just about gale force, causing complete havoc. Two boats though of the South team – Keith Paul in "Confusion" and Larry Marks in "Muchacha" – completed a shortened course at a sometimes frightening speed on the reaching legs!

(Yachts and Yachting 26.8.60)

The next year the Nationals were at Weymouth, with the World Championships the following week, Larry and Keith entered and also Roger Holmes and Peter Button. Larry was placed 4th in the Nationals and Keith 5th in the Worlds; Mrs. Button crewing for her husband, received a large box of chocolates for being the first lady crew home. In 1962 at Hayling Island, Keith still sailing "Confusion" – K1047, regained the title of National Champion and also became World Champion at the meeting at La Baule. It was obviously a successful season starting with the Northampton S.C. Easter meeting, when Keith was first in all the races except the last in which he was second, and Larry was second in all the races except the last which he won!

In 1963 Keith and Larry and their respective crews, David Curtis and Bob Steele, were still gaining their share of successes at English events and were travelling further afield. One trip was described in Gybe-Ho by Keith

'How far and how much trouble should we tolerate for a sail? Larry and I decided to enter an international Regatta at Zeebrugge.... Thursday night everything was packed into the boats and the outfit was securely lashed down. (They had worked out a way of carrying one boat on top of the other.) Friday evening we set off for Dover. Four hours and one mudguard later we arrived rather wearily and started queuing for the ferry. The journey to Ostend was uncomfortable but tolerable, as we thought of the sailing we were to experience. Customs at Ostend were cleared after a short explanation of how we had left our insurance card behind on the mantelpiece. The Officers were most understanding and accepted our 100 francs most graciously. The journey from Ostend to Zeebrugge presented little trouble, apart from a rather rough twenty mile ride over a narrow cobbled road. We arrived at the small fishing harbour at five o'clock in the morning, and for a lack of better ideas, starting rigging the boats, for the first race at ten. The clubhouse was opened at eight o'clock and our kind long suffering hosts presented us with breakfast.

We had four superb races under very tidal conditions over the weekend, and then started the whole rigmarole to get home again. Like so many events, it was worth all the effort and trouble, but we did have our doubts at times.'

In a fleet of 31 boats, "Confusion" and "Muchacha Two" - K1383, were the only British representatives, they finished 1st and 2nd.

Later in the year they were abroad again, at Larchmont Y.C. on Long Island, for the World Championships. Keith was defending his title and seemed all set to retain it after winning the first two races, but he was disqualified 'after a fracas' and lost his winning form. Larry was the highest placed British entry, finishing 6th. The following year Keith started sailing a Plying Dutchman and was seen a lot less in the 505 fleets. Larry too spent most of the year in F.D.\*s, a year his crew described as

'.... an experience I should not like to have missed, at times exasperating at others most satisfying; planing could seem. like sailing through a waterfall and at times I took an intense dislike to the genoa. '

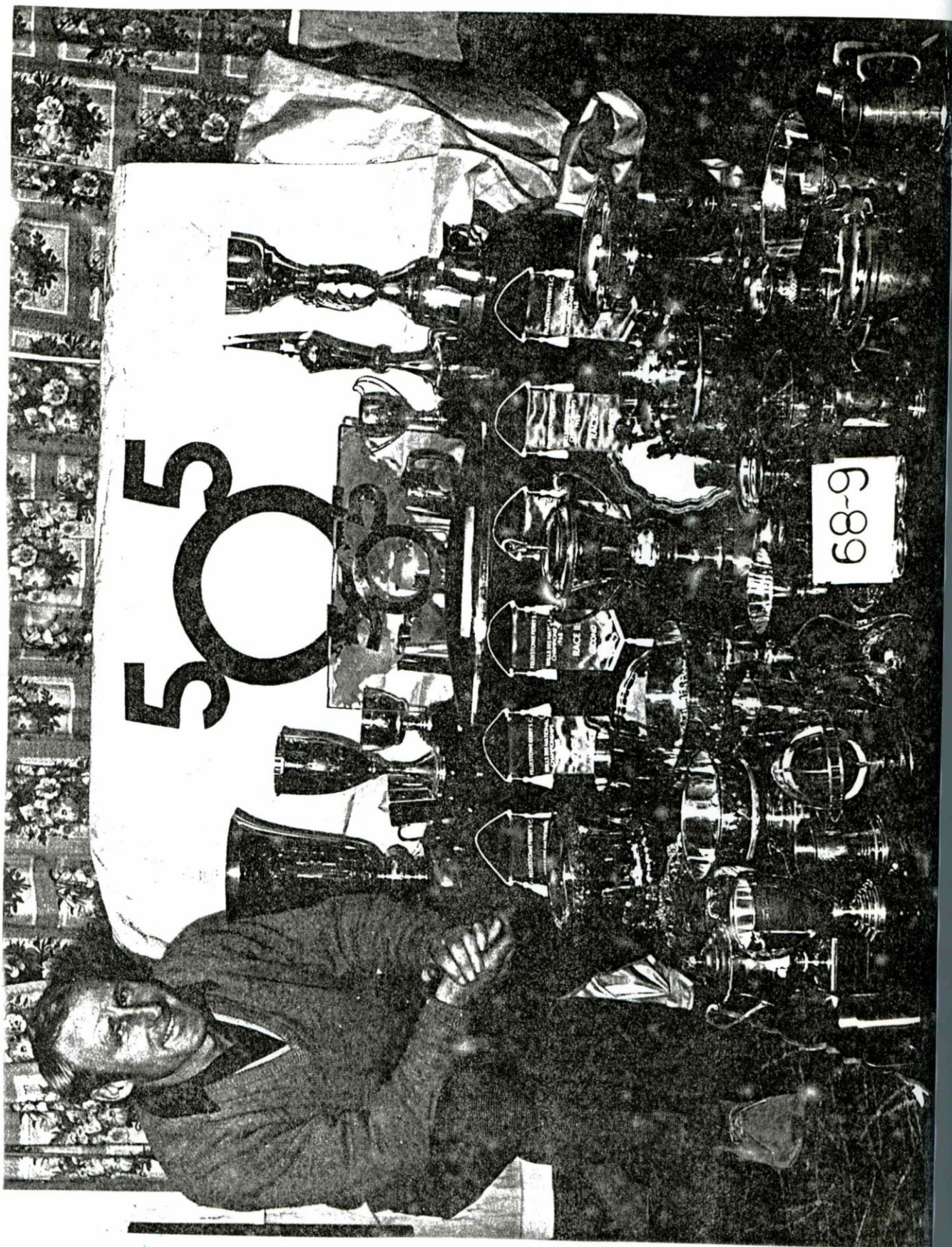
(Gybe-Ho 196!)

They still managed to enter the 505 World Championships at Cork, and but for one missing signature, would have been placed 5<sup>th</sup>.

1965 saw Larry back in 505's full time and he had many successes at home. Then in the Autumn he teamed up with a new crew Dick Hughes, and sailing "Muchacha 111" - K2038 finished 3rd in the World Championships at Tangier. Dick lived in Birmingham, so had a long journey to the sea for any race, but the longest was in 1966 when Larry and he went round the world to compete in the World Championships at Adelaide. Larry described it as a trip of a life time. No effort was spared to make the Championships as near perfect as possible, for example there were tractors laid on to haul the boats to and fro over the sand, and a plane overhead spotting sharks. The local support and enthusiasm was just as good and firms in Adelaide had sponsored 11^ boats for foreign competitors, each one carrying an advert for the sponsor; Larry however had shipped out his own "Muchacha IV" - K2323. After some very keen racing in all sorts of weather and at times mountainous seas, Larry and Dick finished 4th to two Australians and the Dane, Paul Elvstrom.

The 1967 combination of Larry, Dick and "Mu-whatsui-go-go" -K2626, also had a good season and at last Larry became National Champion, beating the Farrant brothers from Hastings S.C. who had held the title for the past four years. Larry and Derek Farrant were the acknowledged 'Kings of the 505's and were continually battling for supremacy over each other. Larry retained the title of National Champion in 1968 with a record of five firsts in six races, and was chosen to go to Buenos Aires as the British representative in the World Championships in January 1969. Dick Hughes was unable to go with him, so Vic Deschamps went as crew and, although they had only sailed together twice before, it immediately proved to be another successful combination. The fleet was smaller than at Adelaide, but competition was fierce, Larry and Vic sailed very consistently and ended with an unbeatable record of three 1sts and four 2nds.





1968-69 A successful season for Larry Marks



Later that year, back home at the National Championships at Plymouth, Larry again sailing with Dick was supported by five other Weston boats. Peter and David Buttigieg, Paul and Vic Deschamps, Colin Steele and crew Joe Sefton, Jim Wishart and crew, and George Hutchinson and crew. There were new contestants from some other top £0£ fleets too, giving really strong competition; each day produced a different winner in races that were sailed generally in very light airs. The final placings made the Buttigieg brothers joint winners with Mike Arnold from Felixstowe Perry S.C., with Larry and Dick 3rd. That year too the "Solent Shower", i.e. Weston No.1 team, won the Autumn team race organised annually by Northampton S.C., this was their sixth win in ten years. In the final they beat their regular rivals "Father's Flyers", i.e. the Hastings No.1 team led by Derek Farrant.

For the 1970 season Larry tuned "Muchacha V" - K3838 and again sailing with Vis Deschamps regained the title of National Champion at Torbay and the following week retained the World title, a week which produced all types of weather conditions and against a very strong entry of 80 boats representing 19 counties. This meant that Weston helmsmen had held the National title six times and the World title three times in a span of eleven years. Then Larry forsook 505's once again and spent two years sailing F.D.'s. But Peter Buttigieg, who had caught the '£05 bug<sup>1</sup> while a Cadet, continued carrying the Weston flag to all parts of the world.

In 1971 Peter entered the European Championships at Copenhagen, taking Mike Henry as crew, because unfortunately Chris Averis, who had planned to go with him was injured in the eye by a spinnaker pole. Later in the year Peter went to Santa Cruz for the World Championships with Robin Felgate as crew, he shipped out a new Rondar prototype fibreglass boat, but it began to break up early in the week and the two of them seemed to spend all their time Aralditing bits back on; he sold it before coming home ! Peter seems to have had a lot of trouble with his boats, although they have always looked superb. For the 1973 season he bought "Rustler", this time a Parker Fibreglass hull, but it had wood rot and after three weeks holes appeared in the decks, it was sent back of course and made good, until at the joint Open Meeting at Weston, "Rustler" was rammed by a Contender and badly holed. Peter was understandably very cross, as it happened just before the boat was due to be packed up and shipped out for World Championships in Hong Kong. By this time Larry was back with the 505's and also went to Hong Kong, taking "Granny Smith" (the boat) and wife Judy; it was quite a party with Peter's wife Margaret, Robin and his wife and Larry's crew Julian Brooke-Houghton, they all enjoyed the trip very much and said that the sailing conditions were particularly good. At the beginning of the week Larry seemed to have regained his <sup>1</sup> touch\* and after three races was leading on points, only to have two poor results, one of them owing to a capsize seconds before the start, and he finished 10th.

Peter sold his boat in Hong Kong and has sailed in 505's very little since then. Larry and another club mate, Colin McKenzie continued to travel to some Open Meetings, but Larry was not able to give as much time to sailing and found that there was a lot of new competition, making it harder to stay at the front of the Fleet. In 1975 he travelled to Bermuda for the World Championships, another enjoyable trip, and fairly successful from the sailing point of view, he finished 4th.



The first Clubhouse & the Cozens Family boats



The Clubhouse 1955-58 Phil Cozens on the Bridge

## Chapter Four – Home Sweet Home

After travelling the world with the 505's, we now return to Weston and the problem that concerned everyone - the provision of some sort of Club premises.

.... To be continued in the next instalment.....