

★ BULLSEYE ASSOCIATION ★

Winter Newsletter

February 1998

EIGHTY-FOUR YEARS AGO....

Recently I visited the Herreshoff Marine Museum in Bristol, Rhode Island, birthplace of the Bullseye as well as a few mere cup defenders and assorted other craft designed by Nathanael Greene Herreshoff, "the Wizard of Bristol." I was looking for historical information about our wonderful little boats.

Carlton Pinheiro, curator of the Museum, was generous with time and information. He loaned me the photograph of Robin, the first Bullseye, which I am using as a centerfold for this Newsletter, since she deserves to be every Bullseye lover's pin-up. At her helm is Sidney Herreshoff, NGH's oldest son, and father of Halsey, who has developed the old shipyard area into a fabulous museum. This picture shows some of the boatworks on the Bristol shore. Sidney in jacket and cap sits a bit low out of the tiny winter breeze. It is December, 1914, and Robin is out for her trial spin.

In Herreshoff of Bristol Maynard Bray and Carlton Pinheiro speculate on what led to the creation of Robin. It seems Robert W. Emmons, manager of the Cup defender Resolute syndicate, was looking for an ideal craft to teach young people to sail, especially on Buzzards Bay where, as many of us know, the southwest wind builds up quite an afternoon chop. One wishes one could have been a fly on the wall listening to conversations and then watching NGH make the half model of what Bray and Pinheiro call "the best loved of all NGH's designs." Herreshoff Manufacturing Company records indicate "Buzzards Bay Boys Boats" as the initial class name. Rare, one guesses, was the girl who sailed in those days. What a change in that regard!

Robin was the first of a group of 20 sisters built during the winter of 1914-1915. The company records indicate that she was #744 of the "sailing boats" built at Herreshoffs. She and her sisters each cost \$420. Her first owner was Stuart Duncan. Mr. Emmons seems to have acted as a promoter for the class because Carlton Pinheiro showed me a letter Emmons had written to Mr. J. W. Hallowell, owner of Granny, #755, to the effect that \$150 would be needed for work to commence, the balance to be paid upon delivery in the spring.

Although Robin's hull certainly looks familiar to today's Bullseye sailor, there are many differences. The gaff rig, club-footed jib, wider cockpit, tiller through the transom, and the lack of a cuddy are obvious. But note the lazy jacks coming down from the lower quarter of the gaff to the middle of the boom. They kept sail and gaff in place and held the boom up when the sail was dropped. Another feature was that all the space below deck forward of the mast consisted of a flotation tank. The only room for storage was under the stern deck, lower than in today's boats to allow the tiller to poke through the transom, plus a place for anchor and rode under the floorboards. If you look carefully at the picture you will see just in front of Sidney to his left an oarlock holder on the coaming and to his right the handle of an oar. The early boats had a rowing thwart, useful at times but eventually considered more nuisance than help.

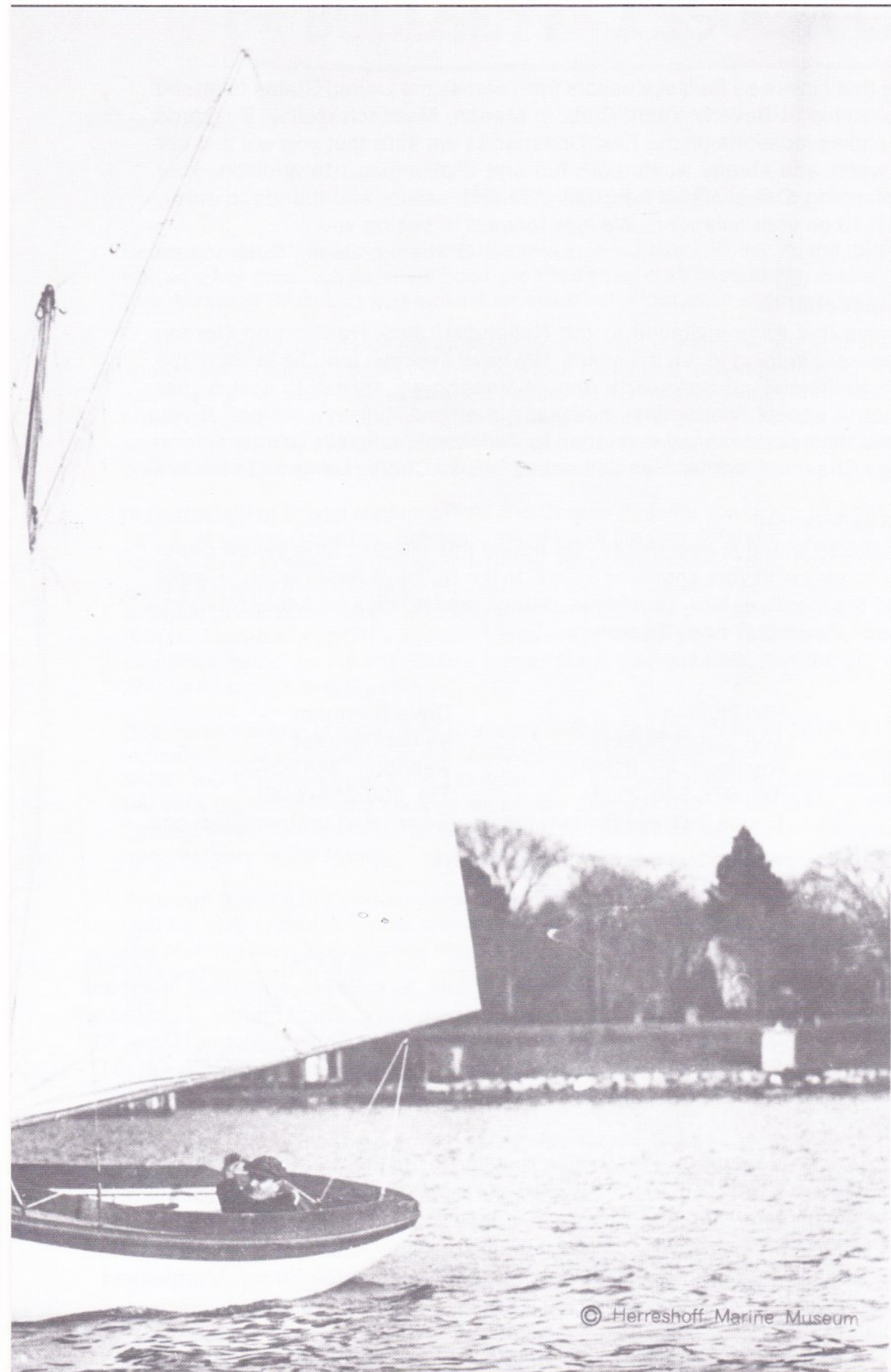
Speaking of nuisances it seems that the club-footed jib had a tendency to rise up when the sheet was slackened for off wind sailing. A 1926 photo of a Bullseye in Bermuda shows a strut coming down to the middle of the club boom from a few feet up the forestay. This might have solved one sail shape problem but probably caused another. No doubt the strut was part of the evolution to the wishbone rig which came into use in 1935.

So how did the Buzzards Bay Boys Boat become known as the Bullseye? Carlton Pinheiro could not help me with 100% authority but he has a theory and I believe he is right. Someone in the early days of Robin and her sisters must have said something like, "Mr. Herreshoff sure hit the bullseye with that little ship." I think we all agree.

Dave Burnham



Robin, the first Bullseye, on her trial spin. S



ANNOUNCEMENTS

From The Beverly Yacht Club

Dear Bullseye sailors,

It is with great pleasure that I invite all Bullseye sailors from across the United States to attend the 1998 class championship at Beverly Yacht Club, in Marion, Massachusetts. Buzzards Bay is one of the best sailing locations on the East Coast and I am sure that you will find our combination of warm water and steady winds both fun and challenging. In addition, your event organizers are planning a weekend of hospitality for both sailors and friends to enjoy. Be sure to mark July 17-19 on your calendar. We look forward to seeing you.

Graham I. Quinn, Commodore

From the President of the Association

How wonderful to receive this early invitation to the Nationals! Jack Rankin and Gordon Goodwin will be the leaders in helping to run the event. We have over five months to savor the excitement of the 37th Nationals! At last year's Annual Meeting we agreed to wait a year before deciding whether to accept floating tack mainsails in official Bullseye racing. If you have observations about their performance in relation to traditional mainsails, please inform Phil Nutting, Technology Chairman, or me. See addresses below. Connie Lavigne, President

From the Secretary of the Association

Your dues notice is enclosed with this Newsletter. Do not let this modest, little yellow paper flutter to the floor. Mail it today with your check for \$10.00 to the Bullseye Association. Please keep working to expand the membership. Your ideas, photos, and articles for future Newsletters are eagerly solicited. David Burnham, Secretary

Useful Addresses

Connie Lavigne
28 Parker Street
Rockport, MA 01966
Tel. 978-546-2071
Fax 508-459-7939

Phil Nutting
16A South Street
Rockport, MA 01966
Tel. 978-546-2594
E-mail Bullseye@shore.net

Dave Burnham
44 River Street
Rehoboth, MA 02769
Tel. 508-252-3442
E-mail Awburnham@aol.com

Internet: <http://www.shore.net/~bullseye>

BULLSEYES FOR SALE

Built c. 1959 Sail #278 \$3,000
Mahogany seats, main (almost new), jenny, working jib, cover, 3 hp Yamaha outboard (well maintained), paddle, dinghy oars, cushions, life preservers. Contact Fred Kiachif, 100 Strickland Road, Cos Cob, CT 06807. Tel. 203-869-7595

Built c. 1974 Sail #702 \$3,500
Completely Awlgrippied, 3-year old sails, no spinnaker. Varnished cap and cockpit coaming. Contact Bill Low, Golf Village, Unit A, Key Largo, FL 33037. Tel. 305-367-3905. E-mail: Billow@worldnet.att.net

Built c. 1962 Sail #354 \$3,000
Fiberglass seats, all sails inc. spinnaker, mast and trailer need some work. Good fittings. Located on Cape Cod in Mashpee. Contact Richard Gray, 316 Russett Road, Chestnut Hill, MA 02167. Tel. 617-323-7070. E-mail: Rgray@alum.mit.edu

Used Bullseyes—More information on boats listed from Connie Lavigne or Phil Nutting. Seller agrees to pay 2 1/2% of selling price to the Bullseye Association. Contact Mark Cohen, Treasurer, 263 Washington Street, Marblehead, MA 01945. Tel. 617-631-6313

BRAND NEW BULLSEYES

Contact Cape Cod Shipbuilding Company, Wareham, MA 02571. Tel. 508-295-3550