

YACHTING WORLD

KEELBOAT

BRILLIANT SUCCESS IN ROUND THE ISLAND RACE: HOW BRISTOL I WON THE GOLD ROMAN BOWL

By "Hot Dog"

At the National Boat Show last January this journal sponsored the new Yachting World Keelboat, and I was able to introduce her to the national and yachting Press, for there was the prototype Zest floating on the pool. She was the only one of her kind.

Since that time a number of boats have been built and a glass fibre version, Bristol I, constructed by Bristol Aeroplane Plastics, Ltd., was entered for the Island Sailing Club's Round the Island Race. She was up against the largest fleet of yachts ever to start in this country and among them many experienced racing men, in fact, the cream of the South Coast racing fleets. It was her first race. She won, not only her class but the overall trophy for the race, the Gold Roman Bowl. This means that, on corrected time, she beat every other yacht in the race. A brilliant achievement and a complete vindication of my claim that here was a new conception in keel boats, one that, at last, would plane. A complete vindication too of her designer, Jack Holt.

The following is an account of the race as sailed by her helmsman. It is a modest account by a highly competent man with a great deal of racing experience. It will be seen that, in spite of various eventualities, the sheer performance of the boat, exploited to the full by her crew, made victory possible.

No comment is needed to emphasize the success of this new addition to the family of Yachting World boats.—The Editor.

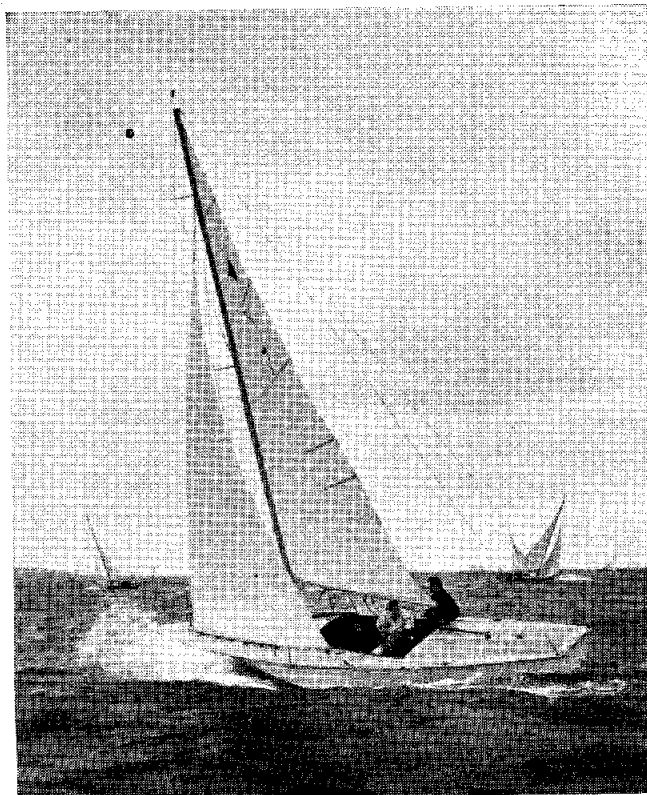
NOT being designed as a Royal Ocean Racing Club rule beater, we had not expected to win anything in the Island Sailing Club Round the Island Race on July 8, let alone the Gold Roman Bowl, in our *Yachting World* Keelboat *Bristol I*. She is one of the first glass fibre boats constructed by Bristol Aeroplane Plastics and it was the first race in which one of these new boats had taken part.

Five minutes after the start success seemed very far away. To be precise we were still right under the starter's box, where we had sailed with the idea of sneaking around Egypt Point on port tack, so being up to windward and later in the strongest tide. What actually happened was that we sailed so close in to the land that we ran out of both wind and favourable tide, then we were put about by loud-shouting starboard tackers. When we finally got going we were two or more hundred yards behind most of the 250-odd yachts in our class.

Then the fitting holding our mainsheet to its track snapped. There we lay, with a big jib and a fluttering main until we could lash up a hasty repair.

Finally we got sorted out and set about trying to catch the dozens of Folkboats and South Coast One Designs ahead. By sticking to the land side of the Solent, in the strength of the tide, we began to gain. Another factor that helped was our speed in tacking. The Y.W. Keelboat spins so quickly and gains way so easily that we could afford to tack continually to clear our wind.

Down by Yarmouth, a little before the astonishing catamaran *Snow Goose* flashed past us and everybody else, we caught sight



Bristol I

[Beken & Son]

of the only other Y.W. Keelboat in the race. She was then two hundred yards ahead, but she was only carrying a small jib compared to our genoa, and she tacked for the mainland just as we tacked for the island. When we came together again we were well ahead of her and did not see her again.

Down by Hurst Castle narrows, where the tide seethes and the water boils, we were coming up with the leading S.C.O.D.s and, at last, we had shaken off all the Folkboats. We even got by a 6-metre and we saw an International O.D. near at hand. I must say the S.C.O.D.s sail fast to windward in a breeze of wind. We had to allow them hours of time, and, here they were, still within seconds of us.

At this stage the wind was freshish and getting fresher. We sailed past two dismasted *Atalantas* and saw another, bigger yacht also mastless. The seas were building up now into channel swells, but *Bristol I* lifted easily and stayed dry as a bone both in the cockpit and on deck.

The tide was pushing everybody past the Bridge Buoy and causing them to overstand so that they had to bear down on it. This and the proximity of a huge, slow moving yawl, right on top of it, made our passage around it distinctly exciting and it was twice a relief to be shot of it, with the helm up and the sheets eased.

We fell to wondering whether there was too much wind to set our spinnaker. Few around us seemed to be carrying theirs but, up ahead, the bigger boats were sporting them. We had a sandwich and a beer and gained confidence.

"Yes," we decided, "it must go up."

Up it went and away we went!

Where we had been surfing sporadically, we began to plane almost continuously. The boat came alive. The craft ahead got quickly bigger and bigger. We had been bearing off into the bay to avoid the tide but now it became more important to go the way that was best for the spinnaker.

For the next three or so miles we really flew, catching up all manner of boats including some in Class II, *Princeza* and *Rapparee* with all manner of unmeasured mizzen staysails.

We began to have difficulty pointing above St. Catherine's Point; as it got nearer we fell to wondering whether we could weather it carrying the spinnaker. Our minds were suddenly made up for us. A harder flaw of wind hit us from a bit ahead, the boat heeled, the spinnaker tugged and the boat fell over and

(Continued on page 413)

YACHTING WORLD KEELBOAT (Continued)

slewed around in a sudden broach-to that sent us all sprawling to leeward. For a second I thought we should founder.

Of course, nothing of the kind happened, we shipped a couple of buckets of water over the lee coaming, then the boat bobbed up and lay there quietly and patiently waiting for us to take off the spinnaker. It proved quite a problem but once done we were able to bear off, get upright and sailing again.

Around St. Catherine's we gained by staying inshore, and we avoided the overfalls too. It is always a source of surprise to me that so many boats go so far out when rounding the island. Runners all make for the inside lane—why don't boats? By now we were up with *Belmore* and *Danegeld*. As soon as we were able to square off we popped up the spinnaker again. It was just as if you had pressed a button. *Danegeld* and *Belmore* receded into the seascape behind. Now we were closing on *Jolina III* and *Springtime*. And we could see *Sardonyx* turning and turning to unwrap her spinnaker like a prisoner shaking off her chains.

We stood too far out past Ventnor and held the starboard gybe too long, thus getting by the lee and wasting time.

Coming up on Bembridge Ledge we closed on the old and yellow spinnakered *Cynthia* and just failed to win an overlap on her at the buoy. So we went around in her backwind, then sharpened up too much because for the moment we had forgotten the Stourbridge Buoys, but at least this got us clear of *Cynthia*. In the close reach to the Forts that followed, we lost very little on *Cynthia* and the boats behind gained very little on us.

We made another boob at the Fort. We had planned to shoot through its wind shadow where it was narrowest, very close in. All we did was to shoot into the wind shadow and stay there, transfixed by the adverse tide. In the three or so minutes of stillness that followed, all manner of yachts came charging past us.

NOTHING VENTURE (Continued)

prise promptly capsized and was dragged through the water with her mast submerged. *Martha* was brought smartly into the wind and I, standing forward of the mast, was nearly knocked overboard by a flapping staysail. It was at this moment that I realized the power of the wind as I was enveloped in flapping canvas and sheets, as the crew dropped anchor and let the flapping jib and staysail on top of me. The sails down, it was all hands to the sinking dinghy, and all six of us set to with saucepans, buckets and washing-up bowls, to bail her out. The dinghy afloat again and fortunately undamaged, her

owners bade us farewell and went ashore.

For some reason that I did not understand, it was decided to get under way using the engine. Having warmed it up, the business of winching up the anchor began, but it was reluctant to part from the river bed and try as we would the chain could only be hauled in so far and no farther. After an hour or so's struggle the skipper asked unexpectedly whether I had any suggestion to make. Having read up this particular type of situation in the catalogue of an anchor manufacturer only the previous day, I was delighted to give my friends the benefit of my wisdom and ex-

perience. I knowledgeably informed them to let out as much chain as they had and to motor round in a circle, keeping the chain taut. This, as I further explained, should turn the anchor from under the obstruction and so free it. There were no objections to this, and under my skilled supervision *Martha* was motored round the anchor. Suddenly, to my immense gratification, the chain went slack and the delighted crew, after brief congratulations on my seamanship, winched in the chain, only to find that there was no anchor attached to the end of it. Oh, well! We all make mistakes!

OFFSHORE AND PASSAGE RACING (Continued)

CLASS III: 1, *Vashti* (J. M. Laing), 49.08.31 (33.26.11); 2, *Arabel II* (Dr. R. Le Couteur), 55.37.01 (36.14.44); 3, *Maica* (H. Rouault), 61.55.34 (40.46.42); 4, *Faem* (C. P. Humphris and R. C. Farnham), 64.10.09 (41.19.53); 5, *Starminx* (R. Craig Wood), 64.31.51 (42.01.48); 6, *Anusona* (Royal Engineer Y.C., sailed by Capt. P. R. Chyworth-Musters), 65.27.10 (43.18.13); 7, *Ben's Choice* (N. H. Jones, sailed by D. M. J. Jones), 64.35.28 (43.24.18); 8, *Freemew* (Brigadier P. O. G. Wakeham, sailed by Maj. General G. W. Duke), 64.50.50 (43.37.45); 9, *Ale Bleue* (E.C.C., sailed by J. Fayard), 66.07.57 (43.49.10); 10, *Micronair* (F. J. R. Britten and Ne D. Norman), 64.26.05 (44.07.53); 11, *Electron* (H.M.S. Collingwood), 65.41.56 (44.42.29); 12, *Belmore* (T. W. M. Steele), 65.58.05 (45.00.12); 13, *Sabeema* (John Lewis Partnership S.C., sailed by J. Sibum), 68.25.35 (45.17.05); 14, *Rondinella* (V. A. Hounsell), 70.29.00 (45.52.13); 15, *Alicia* (Lt. Cdr. J. A. F. Lawson, R.N.), 68.54.30 (46.02.40); 16, *Maze* (Dr. R. Binning and G. C. Paterson), 69.51.55 (46.51.13); 17, *Sereine* (Centre Nautique des Glénans, sailed by T. Sandot), 68.40.55 (47.07.46); 18, *Jethou* (Royal Air Force S.A.), 70.37.30 (48.07.51).

TRANS-PACIFIC RACE

NAM SANG (A. B. Robb), third over the line behind *Sirius II* (H. F. Ahmanson) and *Ticonderoga* (W. Brittan), won the 2,225-mile Trans-Pacific Race, on corrected time.

The race which began at Los Angeles on July 4 with a beat to

At last we wriggled free and hardened sheets for the period of long-and-short tacking that lay between us and the finish. Just past Ryde Pier we stood well in and the tactic seemed to help us. Through Osborne Bay we stood further in and gained more. Then off Old Castle Point we went right in and gained again. We crossed the line just ahead of Michael Henderson's big black cat, *Misty Miller*, and got our gun. We looked at our watches, it was five something. We calculated that we had done the circumnavigation in less than eight hours, and we must have sailed well over seventy miles counting the zigs and zags. It dawned on us, for the first time, that we might, after all, be in the money.

Sailing up the harbour to our mooring of R. and W. Clark's Jasper Blackall, a member of the crew, looked around and remarked that there didn't seem to be many other yachts back in harbour yet.

As it turned out, of course, we won our class, and the overall Gold Roman Bowl (by two and a half minutes), and the Hans Leyman medal for being the first boat home under nine tons (and us with a displacement of very little more than one ton).

But the prizes mattered less than the accomplishment. At last a planing keel boat had triumphed over its unfavourable rating and actually won by planing. So often in the past this had been promised but never performed. Few keel boats of our size could ever have sailed as fast as we had, from the Needles to Bembridge Ledge, around the back of the Wight. And we had done it in complete safety, steadiness and dryness and comfort. Only a cork is more buoyant and seakindly than a truly light displacement yacht.

It had been a great day's sail around one of the world's most naturally perfect racing courses. None of the three of us aboard will forget it for a long time.

round Catalina Island and then turned into a reach and a run before the north-easterly Trade Winds was sailed mainly in fair weather with wind speeds of from 10 to 20 knots. It was punctuated, however, by some treacherous squalls and many spinnakers were lost, as well as a mainsail and one mizzen. *Sirius II* was struck at dusk by such a 40-knot squall, carrying away her spinnaker just a few miles from the finishing line and she arrived with it still trailing astern.

International colour was lent to the race by the Italian Naval Academy yawl *Corsaro II* and by *Troubador* (P. Graham) and *Mary Bower* (K. McRae) from Canada. In a special Tall Ships class were the two Japanese training ships, *Nippon Maru* and *Kaiwo Maru*, both 320ft long.

The first part of the race was very fast and at the half-way mark the leading boats were well ahead of the course record but the winds then eased and *Sirius II* finished twenty hours outside the time of the record holder, *Morning Star*.