

Hamble Stars



First Hamble Star

In 1926, Hamble's Luke Brothers Boatyard designed and built the 'Hamble Star', a one design centreboard sailing dinghy, for Hamble River Sailing Club. It became a popular racing dinghy with two crew on the river and in the Solent. It was 14ft long and had an open hard chine carvel planked hull with a gunter rig. The original six Hamble Stars built in 1926 cost £37 complete, except for oars although rowlocks were included.

Star number 1 was built for Captain Nelson, the second HRSC Commodore, and he allowed the Hamble Sea Scouts to use it. Hamble Sea Rangers also had one of the first Hamble Stars and later the Training Ship Mercury owned some for its cadets to sail.

As well as regularly racing with the sailing club, over a dozen regularly raced in the regattas and in 1952 it was the largest fleet.

Later Hamble Stars were built by Port Hamble and Hampers of Fareham with the highest registered number being number 115. A very few of the later dinghies were built in non Hampshire boatyards.

In the 1960s the Hamble Star was used at HRSC as an introduction boat for beginners to sailing or for safe sailing for families and older sailors who were not as nimble as they use to be. Many Hamble residents learnt to sail in a Hamble Star, including the author of this article.

One of the last Hamble Stars raced at Hamble in the 1960s was 'Spica' number 97, owned by Bernard Ward who came second in the 1967 regatta at

the age of 80. Bernard Ward, known as 'Pop' Ward, also occasionally sailed his Hamble Star out to Calshot Lightship to deliver newspapers, magazines and other comforts for the crew.

Due to the introduction of plywood and GRP dinghies, such as the Mirror, which were easy to maintain and not heavy to pull up the beach, the Hamble Stars ceased to race in the late part of the 1960s and they gradually disappeared from the river, but fortunately Erith Yacht Club on the Thames had an active fleet.

This was due to Michael Robinson, known as Robbie, who was born in a cottage next to the river at Hamble. He worked at the National Maritime Museum in London and after the Second World War he went to Erith Yacht Club with one of his much beloved Hamble Star dinghies.

EYC bought up Hamble Star dinghies as they became available. Many new members to the EYC were taught to sail in these dinghies and Robbie taught youngsters of 14+ to sail and occasionally took them and the dinghies to Holland. A Michael Robinson Sailing Trust was set up in 1993, with the objective to advance the education of children and young people in the art of sailing and maintenance of sailing vessels.

At the beginning of 2015 there were 14 Hamble Stars at Erith, except for two which were privately owned, all the others were part of the Hamble Star Class Association. The Association rented the boats out on a long or short term basis so as to enable new or old members to have the facility to sail. The only proviso was they maintain their dinghies.

Although the Hamble Stars had disappeared from the Hamble River they had thrived on the Thames since Michael Robinson introduced them after the war.

Unfortunately, EYC decided that due to maintenance considerations and other factors they were excess to requirement as a training fleet and offered them for sale. On the 7th June 2015, in their 90th anniversary year, the Hamble Stars had a farewell race as a fleet, before their disposal. Would this be the end of the Hamble Star?

The Hamble Star was not so easily killed off, as Mike Blackman a Bursledon resident and sailor, who was planning to start a fleet of two crew dinghies, possibly Enterprises, for racing on the Hamble River, changed his mind and stepped in to save the Hamble Star.

On hearing the Hamble Stars were for sale he offered to buy eight of them sight unseen and has brought them back to the Hamble River. They are kept adjacent to the Jolly Sailor pub at Bursledon and they made their debut as a fleet at the 2015 Bursledon Regatta. Due to various circumstances only four could race, numbers 28, 54, 84 and 108, and it was pleasing to see them being crewed by people of all ages, particularly families.

Next time you are on the river look out for them and hopefully they will again be a familiar sight on the Hamble River.

Hamble Stars at the 2015 Bursledon Regatta



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Hamble River Star Class Dinghies

For several seasons a want has been felt for a small one-design dinghy class in the Hamble River. Dinghy racing in the past has been of the handicap variety, but the disparity in the speed of the heterogeneous collection of dinghies that raced, was so great, and the time allowances so elastic, that racing dwindled owing to the lack of spirited competition on even terms, which latter is essential for continuous racing.

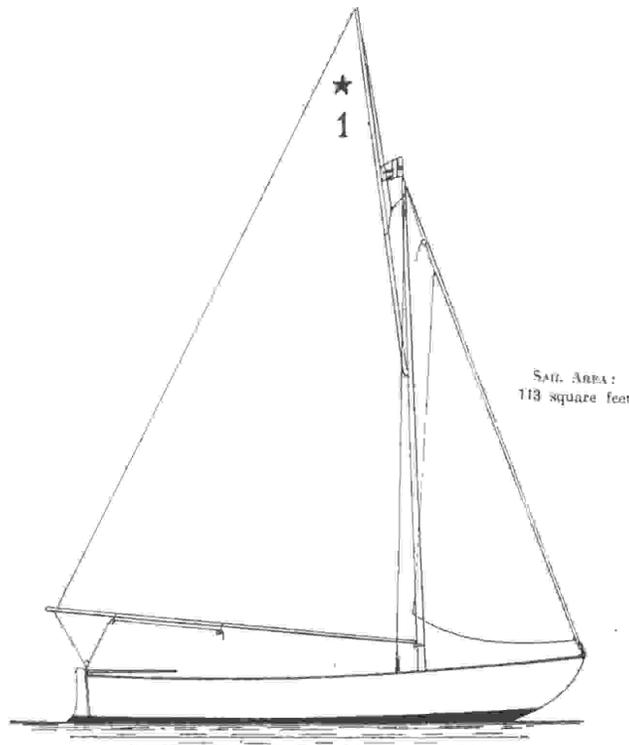
To encourage the younger generation, efforts were made at the end of last season to start an O.D. dinghy class. These efforts have been so successful, that six boats are now being built by Messrs. Luke Bros. to Mr. A. R. Luke's design.

These craft are open centre board dinghies, 14 ft. O.A., 5 ft. beam, and carry 113 sq. ft. of sail. A gunter lug has been

decided upon, as the tall Bermudian mast has proved a nuisance in dinghies, owing to its height making them liable to capsize in hard blows at their moorings. The plate which will weigh about 45 lbs., is easily unshipped, thus making the boat suitable for carrying in davits.

It was the intention of the club when forming the class, to obtain a boat suitable for boys and ladies to race in, and Mr. Luke has paid particular attention to all that pertains to seaworthiness, ease of handling and simple gear, to ensure this end.

The class has been named "The Hamble River Star Class" and all boats will be named after stars. The cost per boat is £37, which includes sails and all gear ready for racing.



SAIL PLAN OF 14 FT. HAMBLE RIVER STAR CLASS

Scale: $\frac{1}{2}$ in = 1 ft.