



Jolly Boats, L To R Bob Derrick, Bill Kaiser's BARF BUCKET, Ralph Ganniard's SHARK and Dick Handler's ALARM.

JOLLYBOAT

The Rochester Yacht Club Jollyboat Fleet had its beginnings at Newport Yacht Club on Irondequoit Bay when Dick Handler appeared in the summer of 1957 with the brand new U.S. 154. The jollyboat was one of the early planing sailboats, designed by Uffa Fox and built in hot molded plywood by Fairey Marine in Great Britain. The true planing sailboat was a major breakthrough in dinghy design, a boat that planed routinely when sailed properly at a relatively low wind velocity, as contrasted with boats that surfed unpredictably under extreme conditions.

The Jollyboat Fleet grew rapidly on the Bay, attracting a group of reckless novices such as Bill Kaiser, Wes Dawes, Ben O'Brien, Dave Heinrich, George Coy, Ralph Ganiard, Bob Derrick (with Doug Hooper on the trapeze!), Gene Faust, Ed Plenge, Rick Guttenberg, Dave Lent, and others.

In 1960 the Jollyboat Fleet began to move to Rochester Yacht Club and by 1962 almost the entire group were here. At that point, and for the next few years, the fleet grew with the addition of Jim Kraft, Don Sproule, Bob Corbett, Arnie Frear, and more.

The skill of the fleet was high; however, for several years Wes Dawer (with Wilma standing on the Trapeze) caught fire and became the one to beat. RYC's 18 Jollyboat skippers sailed well and competently, competing in such places as Marblehead, Westhampton, Buffalo, Put-in-Bay,

Annapolis, Nags Head, North Carolina, Georgia, and Montreal. Twice the National Championships were held at RYC.

Over the years the fleet gained notoriety by capsizing constantly and with little provocation. It is hard to determine who led in this endeavor: Was it Dawes at Marblehead with one leg in a cast?, Bill Kaiser at Buffalo Canoe Club with his non-swimming bride valiantly hanging on?, Gene Faust in first place somewhere, going down the drain as the competition gracefully planed across his mast?, Dick Handler emulating a submarine with George Coy still riding the trapeze?, Ben O'Brien doing a swan dive into the mainsail his first day on the trapeze?, or Jim Kraft sailing in after a three hour stint in the Lake, fighting would-be "rescuers?"

Alas, Fairey Marine stopped building the Jollyboat. A few efforts were made to build the boat in Canada and the United States, but the new boats were not very competitive, and slowly the RYC Jollyboat Fleet faded. A few of the boats are still sailed regularly at Pultneyville; others are used as day sailors often terrifying their owners in a blow. The Jollyboat sailors have continued their tradition of good sailing and good fun for many years at RYC. They are the products of an exciting boat competitively sailed in a spirit of good fellowship and the challenge of one design racing.