

Yachts and Yachting Letter 1981

In 2020, a year of Lockdown, we decided to re-vamp the office and moved everything out into the lounge. We had to take the door off to enable us to remove 2 x A0 plan chests. This also meant relocating lots of Yacht and Yachting magazines dating from the 1970's to around 2011!

At various times over the years we have gone through the magazines to take out photos and articles etc. that we would like to keep and archive. As by now the magazines are not in strict date order, this task was a bit random in terms of date order etc.

In late January this year we decide to return to this task, whilst Boris was doing his Covid thing on the telly, we opened up an issue dated 13th March 1981. And in the Reader's Write section spotted a letter from Peter Brookman (Michael's father) who was NTOA Hon Treasurer from 1957-74.

EARLY GENERAL RECALLS RECALLED

from Peter Brookman

I hesitate even more than did Winter Sharp to enter the lists with Gerald Sambrooke-Sturgess, and for that matter with Mr Sharp himself. I can however throw some light on the introduction of the five-minute rule, at least to National Twelve fleets.

As Winter Sharp states, we sailed the 1956 Burton Week at Weymouth, with the general recall provision written into the sailing instructions, and it appeared again at Falmouth in 1957. All went well at the latter meeting until Thursday August 29th when the Burton Cup race was signalled. Some 120 or more dinghies presented themselves for the eleven o'clock start, in light breeze conditions and a weather-going stream. The first and second recalls were accepted philosophically, the third and fourth began to irk, and the fifth and sixth drew mutinous rumblings from the fleet. I forget now how many starts were signalled, but as I recall it was approaching one o'clock before we got away. At about 1230 the race officer, Captain Currey, had roared from his bridge (he was on an RAF air-sea rescue launch) something to the effect that he had the patience and the ammunition (and his lunch) to keep us there all day if need be. Eventually we got away and, faced with the four rounds of the Burton itself, quickly forgot the tortuous start. Captain Currey, however, did not forget. When we arrived at the dinghy park next morning we each found a slip of paper stuffed under our boat covers. It advised an alteration to the Sailing Instructions '... any boat to windward of the Starting line, after the five minute gun, will be disqualified...' We all went to the line in weather conditions almost identical to those of the day before, no one was anywhere near the line at the start, and we were off first time.

I still have the slip of paper which, by chance, has survived.

**Peter Brookman,
Quorn, Leics.**

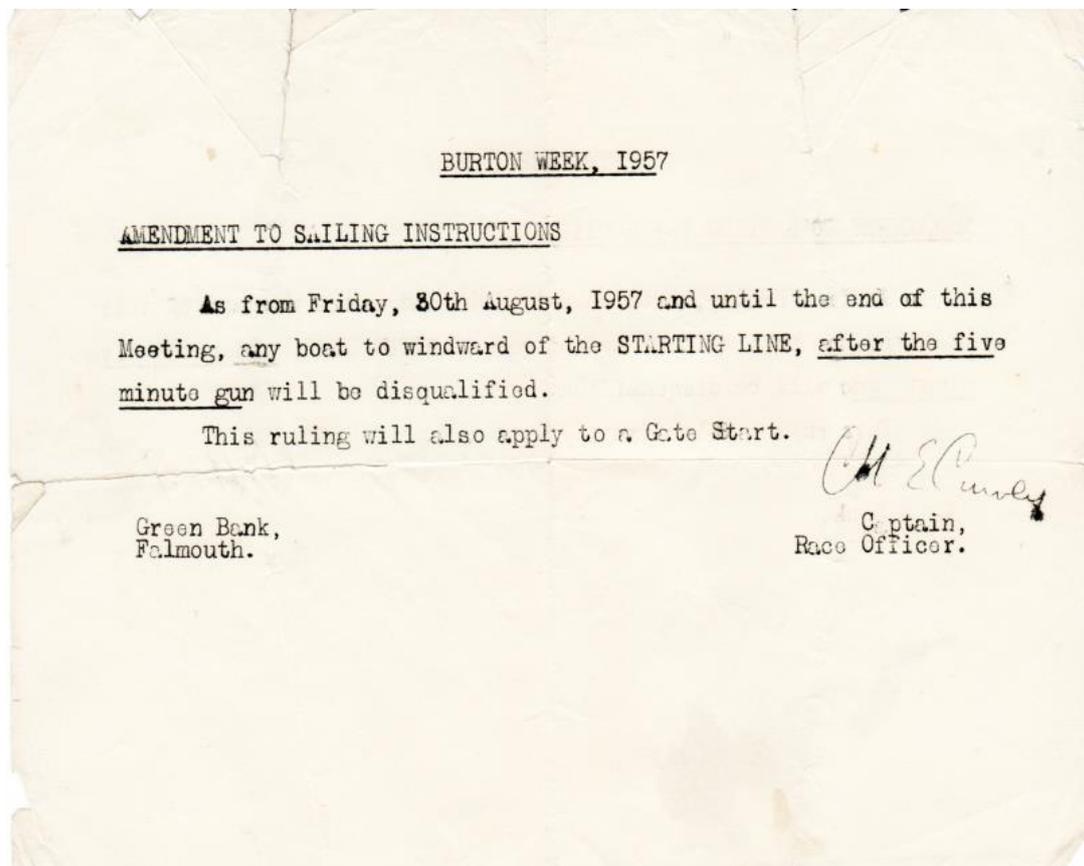
The letter appears to be in response to, probably, an article in a previous issue of the magazine by Gerald Sambrooke-Sturgess, and a response from H Winter Sharp neither of which we have been able to locate, as these issues were probably disposed of sometime earlier without then knowing their significance to Peter's letter.

Sambrooke-Sturgess regularly contributed to Y & Y, writing articles on the Racing Rules, Appeal cases and race administration etc. He was involved with IYRU an Olympic Judge and also wrote books on the same subjects.

H Winter Sharp was an RYA Measurer and Race Officer who had involvement with the National Twelve Class in both roles.

We would guess the letter pertains to the matter of when and where the 5 Minute Rule was (first?) put in place to control the fleet at the start (a forerunner to the Black Flag Start).

On reading the letter we wondered whether (as Peter mentions at the end that he still had the "slip of paper" (Change to the SIs) whether Michael still had the note in his records. And here it is!



Michael also has the Burton Week 1957 Sailing Instruction Booklet See later

We have now stacked all the remaining magazines in year order and unfortunately we don't have the relevant copy that the letter refers to, it would have been early 1981 or late 80. Our pile now only goes back to 1983 earlier ones would have been disposed of previously.

Kevan Bloor