

Cherubs are Catching On

As published in Power Boat and Yachting magazine in January 1965.

A total of 40 Cherubs will take part in second Australian championship for the class in January - some travelling across Australia to the venue in Perth.

THIS is an indication of the enthusiasm amongst Cherub owners and supporters. When boats currently building are registered, the Australian fleet will total more than 150. In the few years that Cherubs have been sailing in Australia, this is a remarkable rate of growth for a new class of this type. The Cherub, a 12-footer with 100 sq. ft. in the working sail, a generous spinnaker and trapeze for the forward hand, was designed by New Zealand's John Spencer in 1952. It is a fairly closely controlled restricted design and since its inception as a class Spencer has produced seven "marks" of the boat. Each mark differs in relatively small particulars, but the result has been that the boat's capabilities have been extended over the years and it has not been too difficult or costly to up-date boats of an earlier mark.



This is one of Victoria's first Cherubs. Originally a Mark IV design, it was converted to Mark VII for less than £7

Late figures on class numbers which may have altered by the time this is printed are Queensland 20, Western Australia 35, N.S.W. 32, Victoria 43, Tasmania 1. The lone Tasmanian boat has been affiliated with the Victorian Cherub Class Owners' Association until such times as there are enough boats to warrant a Tasmanian association.

The first Australian Cherub titles were held last January at Phillip Island, Victoria, with the Newhaven Yacht Squadron being the host club. Out of a total strength at the time of 60 boats, there were 27 entries - six from Perth and seven from Queensland. The senior and junior titles were taken out by Western Australia's **Cupid III** (G. Wright, skipper, G. Bisdee, forward). For the second national series, the Mounts Bay Y.C., at Pelican Point, Perth, will be the host. There will be five heats with four to count and scoring on the Olympic system. The series will be between January 3 and 11, 1965. Entries for the championships show 32 from Western Australia, six from Victoria and two from Queensland.

The Victorian contingent totals about 30 people comprising crews, reserve crews and supporters. Most travelled by the transcontinental train but several trailed their boats over. The remaining boats will be carried over by an interstate haulier and delivered right to the Mounts Bay Club.

The keenness of the Queensland contingent can perhaps be gauged from the fact that they will travel some 4000 miles each to compete. The boats are **Glee** (Des West skipper, K. Hoolihan crew) and **Boomerang II** (Peter Tyrill skipper). **Boomerang** was shipped to Melbourne aboard a freighter and taken by road transport with the Victorian contingent. Des West set himself the task of trailing Glee behind his car all the way there and back, while Boomerang's crew travelled with her.

Victoria's hopes were centred on Newhaven champion, Ian Huther, with his beautifully built Mark VII job, **Cheetah II**. Another one to watch will be Ray Moat in **Cherob II**. Both these craft were specially built for the championships. Among other good performers from Newhaven are **Loyla**, skippered by Dennis Hyland and crewed by Bruce Talbot. As an example of the kind of enthusiasm they have at Newhaven, the club's ladies' auxiliary offered to raise £200 needed to pay for transporting the boats. They did this in less than five months and had enough over to pay the entrance fees for each boat into the bargain.

Apart from the registered Cherubs in Victoria, there are a good many building. Latest figures to hand showed there were 24 at Newhaven, eight at Lake Boga, one at Geelong, three at Sandringham, two at Hampton and two at Brighton, and two at Parkdale. Another fleet is most likely to be formed at Parkdale, probably with an initial 10 boats. The club at Black Rock is also considering the class. If this happens Port Phillip Bay will have quite an extensive population of Cherubs.

The Cherub Class Owners' Association of Victoria was officially recognised as a class association at a recent meeting of the Victorian Yachting Council. The Western Australian and Queensland yachting bodies also recognise those Cherub associations. N.S.W., with one of the quickest growing fleets, is likely to have formed an owners' association in the near future.

During the course of the forthcoming national titles it is expected that a conference will be held on the proposal to form an Australian Cherub Class Council. This will govern the class activities in Australia, but will be subordinate to the Cherub Class Owners' Association of New Zealand, which is the world governing body.

It had been hoped to have an inter-dominion series in conjunction with the Australian titles. But the time and distance involved for the New Zealanders to get themselves and boats to and from Perth was found to be too much. However, about 15 New Zealand Cherubs should be able to make the following championship series to be held in Queensland. However, it is understood that the current New Zealand Cherub and Q Class champions, Russell Botterill, and forward hand, Wayne Dillon, will come over for the present series, bringing their Cherub, **Even Stevens**. But they have recently gone into Flying Dutchmen. Last year they attended the championships at Newhaven, sailing **Wattie's Pride**, hastily converted to a Cherub after sailing in the 12ft. Interdominion Series as a Q Class. Also from New Zealand, the general secretary of the C.C.O.A. of N.Z., Mr. Joe Felton, reports that the entire New Zealand contingent to the Olympic Games, including the Flying Dutchman gold medal winner, had graduated from Cherub sailing.

This news came at a time when senior yachtsmen in several States are starting to take more than just a casual interest in the Cherub. It could be that the Cherub might find increasing favour as in intermediate training class. If it does become a strong national class - and Australia lacks a modern high-performance centreboard class that is truly national - it will provide a readymade stepping stone to the Olympic classes. More and more administrators in yachting are coming to see the need for a popular national class that is not expensive, to spread keen competition over more -people and encourage our younger sailors.

In Queensland, the class has also been progressing. There are about 17 registered boats in the State and at least eight are being built. Cherubs are sailed at four clubs around Brisbane. They are the Humpybong Yacht Club, South Brisbane Sailing Club, Brisbane Sailing Club and Sandgate Yacht Club. The date and venue for the Queensland championships was decided during December. This event will be eagerly looked forward to by Cherub sailors as there has not yet been any inter-club competition. Despite this, reports from the clubs indicate a very high standard of competition in inter-club races.

There was another development in Victoria when early in December a meeting of Cherub owners and interested people at Royal Brighton Yacht Club formed a Port Philip District fleet. It is hoped that as class numbers grow, fleets will be formed in various areas where owners feel they are needed.

Another development has been the allotting of a block of 20 sail numbers to Australia by the New Zealand body. Mr. Percy Fraser, Commodore of the Newhaven Yacht Squadron, and possibly the Cherub's most vocal and effective publicist, will be maintaining a stock of plans for sale. He also has a number of class rule 'books and measurement forms. Plans cost £3/18/5 including a 6/- registration fee. They are available from Mr. Fraser at 26 King Street, Melbourne.