

By ROGER
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THE prototype Sonnet was launched in the summer of 1968 and the present fleet is about to pass the 464 mark. The large fleet is an indication of the immense popularity of this fine yacht, which is still increasing.

The first production Sonnet, a GRP version, was launched in 1970 by Kit Westcott. He was elected the first Class Association secretary, a position he still holds today. Kit takes great interest in the class and encourages all those interested from his Hermanus base. When the Sonnet Nationals take place, Kit is always the backbone of the organisation.

The Sonnet was designed in Cape Town by Jack Koper who has been president of the Class Association since its inception. Jack must have had a bout of inspiration when he sat down to design the Sonnet, as the boat has proved to be a winner. This may be due to the suitability of the Sonnet for families, and parent-children crew combinations.

TO CRUISE

The Sonnet is also popular with those who want only to cruise. It has proved to be an exciting and competitive racing boat.

The first major trophy competed for was the Westcott Trophy sailed at the Hermanus Yacht Club where there is a strong fleet. Zeekoevlei Yacht Club, Imperial Yacht Club and Milnerton Aquatic Club promote Sonnets and have large fleets.

The Sonnet has full recognition from the Western Province Sail-

Set sail in Sonnet

competes at the annual provincial championships at Saldanha Bay. In recent years local stalwarts Dr Lennie Handler and Peter Standley have been awarded their provincial colours for their achievements in the Sonnet class.

coming under a good deal of pressure from Ken Priday of Imperial YC, Stephen Flesch of Zeekoevlei YC and Geoff Ermer of Milnerton AC, which shows a pleasing spread of the top skippers.

Although numerous GRP hulls were built,

Westcott, who will supply full details. Kit also has a list of good secondhand boats. Action Yachting builds the boat.

The Sonnet is a strict one-design class and apart from for one or two minor changes it is the same as the original

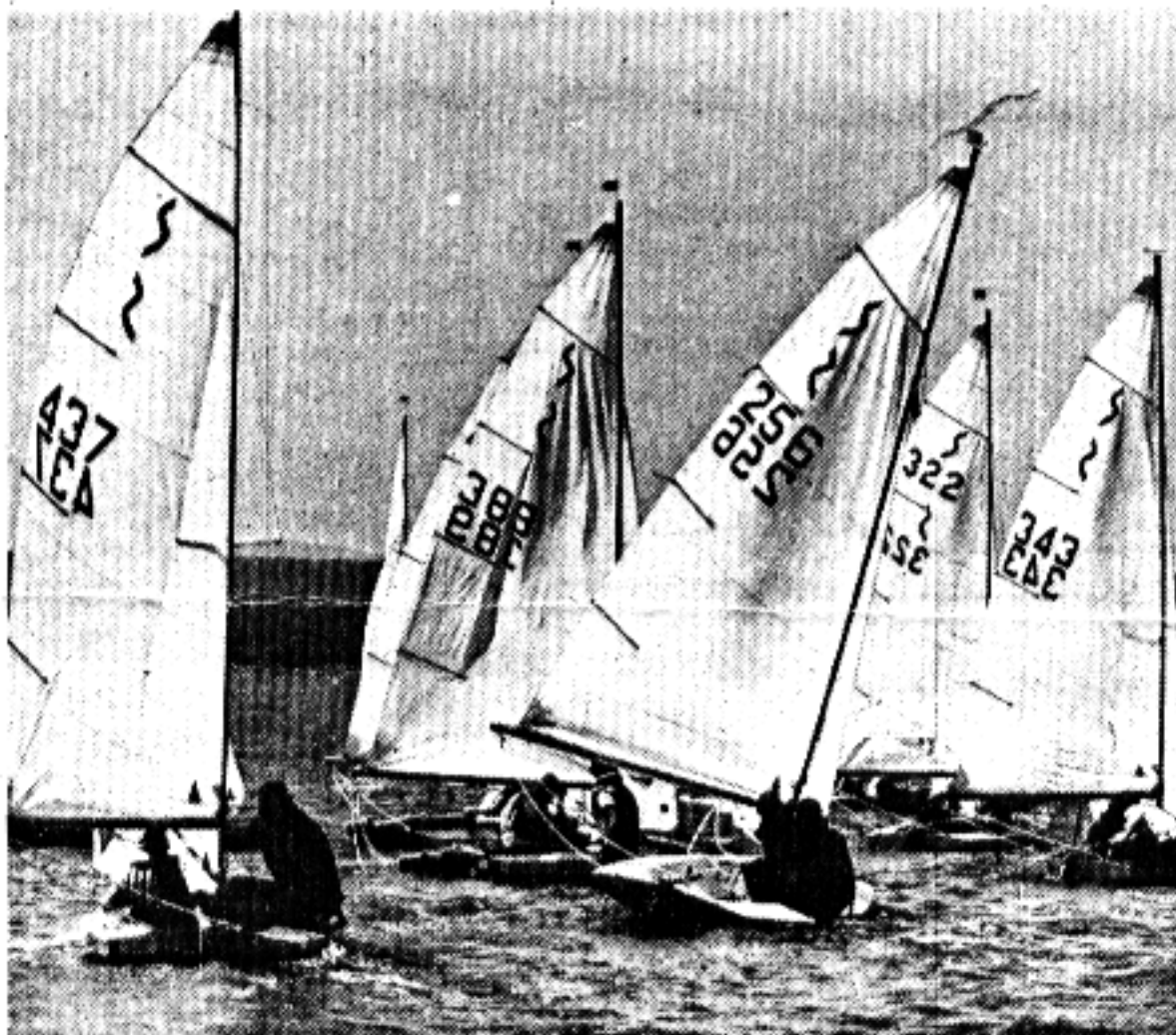
This is the first of a series of articles on different classes of dinghies and yachts.

The Sonnet Nationals are popular and more than 40 boats usually compete. Peter Standley of Hermanus YC has won the past three Nationals but lost to Dr Lennie Handler at last year's WP Championships. This year he is

no one has been able to produce a successful version in this material since MSM ceased production quite a while ago. The Sonnet can be built at home in wood by the amateur. Prospective home builders should contact Kit

— the boats do not date. The Sonnet has hard chines and a fairly flat bottom, giving it tremendous stability even in foul weather.

Rigging is simplicity itself (class rules ensure this) and the boat is extremely easy to



sail as it has only a mainsail and a jib with simple controls. The pivot point of the centreboard is adjustable so the Sonnet can be sailed single-handed with the mainsail only by moving the centreboard to remove troublesome weather helm.

Technical Details

Length 4,375 m. Beam 1,525 m. Weight 70 kg (minimum).

Sail area — Mainsail 6 sq m, Jib 2,30 sq m.

Draught — centreboard up 150 mm, down 775 mm.

Useful Contacts: Sonnet Class Association secretary Kit Westcott, ☎ 02831-21975; Action Yachting ☎ 72-9044 (021).

● The Topper, which holds the British Design Council Award for outstanding design and is the first truly mass-produced dinghy, was developed by the British National Research Development Corporation and the giant ICI. The technical expertise behind the product is enormous.

It is one of the fastest-growing dinghy classes in the world — more than 22 000 have been sold — and is making its appearance at local clubs.

It is called the Topper because of the ease with which it can be carried on the roof of a car and its lightness makes it a simple task for women and children to handle. Deck layout is basic and the stability is above average. With the simple rig of one sail it will be popular out here with all the family.

Next month we will feature a full and detailed report with a boat test by Springbok Rick Nankin. Toppers are imported by Fun Boats. Further information is available from Action Yachting, ☎ 72-9044 and the Boat Shop,