

HOYA HOYA HOYA

A look back to Cotton Blossom and her rich R class heritage

In the very early 1900s, the first R boats began sailing off the Rocky River when CYC was known as the Cleveland Yacht Club. Sir Thomas Lipton donated a Lipton Trophy for R Class Yachts to CYC in 1919. This trophy is on display next to the fireplace at our club. Thus began our club's R class heritage.

In the early 1920s, because of the post-war depression of that time and the financial disaster our club faced, a few members, including Ed Noble and Lee Wilson, reorganized the Cleveland Yacht Club into The Cleveland Yachting Club. Subsequently, Ed Noble became Commodore in 1929, as did Lee Wilson in 1943. Wilson began a love of Rs that brought *Cotton Blossom* to the Rocky River around 1920 where she was recognized as a notable R class sailboat, widely considered one of the finest designs (Burgess) of her time.

Cotton Blossom began, under Lee Wilson's ownership, to have perhaps the most significant impact on the CYC R fleet (and Toronto's National Yacht Club's fleet) when Lee chose to have this wooden R cloned as the first Fiberglass R boat built here in Rocky River, in the early 1950s. Today at CYC, *Cotton*, *Pop n' Jack*, *Scorpion* and *Lovely Lady* all were built using the *Cotton Blossom* mold. At least an additional eight Rs were built after the CYC boats were completed, in Toronto

when that club bought the *Cotton Blossom* mold from the Cleveland fleet in the late 1960s. *Cotton* is truly the mother of the plastic Rs and she is singularly responsible for maintaining R boat racing at CYC. (FYI, *Ardette* and *Puffin* are both wood, dating from the 1920s and meticulously maintained.)



A scale model of the original wooden *Cotton Blossom* is on display on the second floor of the club. She represented



the Wilson Trophy that has been sailed for by the Rs every summer since 1958 when the model was

donated by Lee, Marge and Nancy Wilson.

Winner of numerous championships, *Cotton* remained in the Wilson family for many years and was sailed competitively by three generations of the Wilson/Malm families. While there have been other owners in the interim before our newest group, all who have experienced the satisfaction of sailing *Cotton* had stepped forward to honor her heritage and to respect her home at CYC.

Most recently, Jeff Herzog, Neal Curran and Terry Walkerly began a painstaking program of restoring *Cotton* to her well-deserved soundness and classic beauty. Their attention to detail and respect of her history is nothing short of belief. The hours, days, weeks and months of

time working on her for over two years have resulted in her recent launch and return to active racing this year. She is once again, the sleek classic sloop, beautiful red in color, and the pride of her owners and those of us who sail and recognize this special boat.

Please stop down to the R fleet docks and see for yourself.

We all welcome her back to the water. As we say in the R fleet: HOYA HOYA HOYA!

—P/C Charley Bredt

PHOTOS by
Peg Indermaur and Betsy Yingling

ON THE COVER: Dating back to the early 1900s, the *Cotton Blossom* has won numerous championships and has been recently restored.