

PRE-1960 THE NATAL YEARS

In the 1920s, sailing in the Edmonton area was primarily on Cooking Lake. The main reason being that it was close to the city and roads existed to get there. The lake in those days had a healthy water depth and was over 30 kilometres in length. The Edmonton Yacht Club (EYC) began on Cooking Lake in 1923.

Lake Wabamun was considerably farther to drive from the city and there were fewer roads to allow lake access. Kapasiwin at the east end of the lake was closest to Edmonton so cottages began to appear there first in the 1920s and 30s. Seba, at the west end, had the best beach on the lake so it naturally became the second lakefront resort area to be built. In between, along the north shore, was undeveloped lakefront land.

The Edmonton Yacht Club relocated from Cooking Lake to Seba Beach in 1940. The roads and cars were much better and Cooking Lake was getting more shallow every year.

After the war, cottage owners in Kapasiwin began to sail more frequently. In 1947 the Kapasiwin Yacht Club, located in Moonlight Bay had six Comets, four Lightnings, and five International 14s. Carl Clement organized their first regatta that year. He donated a trophy called the Clement Cup and invited boats from the Edmonton Yacht Club to compete against them. The Clement Cup is the oldest and most prestigious trophy still in use today at the Wabamun Sailing Club.

As roads and boat trailers improved, more sailors began to travel to other clubs to

compete in regattas. In 1954 the first ever Alberta Provincial Regatta was held at the Edmonton Yacht Club.

In the 1950s there was a second group which sailed in Moonlight Bay by Kapasiwin. The Royal Canadian Naval Sailing Association (RCNSA) had a location immediately behind the railway trestle.


In 1955 the commodore was Bob Hurlburt and the Fleet Captain was Rodney Pike. They owned seven 14 foot Cat Boats and had 26 members.

There was frustration with the trestle impeding access to the main lake so investigations were made to find a new site along the north shore. A site was selected along Ascot Beach. Dan Sorochan led a tree clearing work party of six on a rainy May long weekend. However the association never raised sufficient funds to purchase the land.

In 1956 there were 33 members of RCNSA including Bob Hurlburt, Dr Robert Henderson, Dan Sorochan, Don Ferris, Dr, Charles Learmonth, Rodney Pike and George Field.



DINGHYS AND LIGHTNINGS RACE AT SEBA IN THE EARLY 1950S



• Racing rules were fairly primitive in those days. If you committed a foul such as hitting a mark, the only option was to withdraw from the race. No 360 or 720 rules existed.



(LEFT) A BEAUTIFUL CRUISE FOR LORNA AND GLENN CHERITON ON THEIR FLYING DUTCHMAN ON LAKE WABAMUN
Photo by Ross Cheriton

(BELOW) ALBERTA PROV. REGATTA Seba Beach, September 1958. The new Y-Flyer Fleet with George Field in Y289.



That year, a new exciting boat with a spinnaker and a trapeze appeared on the lake and took the sailing community by storm. It was the 18 foot Y-Flyer. It was wildly popular and could be home built with marine plywood. By 1957 there were over twenty Y-Flyers on the lake amongst all the clubs.

RCNSA organized home and home race weekends with EYC for July and August. Many of the RCNSA members were now building cottages along the newly accessible northern



- Race management was fairly limited at that time. Non-sailing wives usually ran races off the end of piers and there was no rescue boat. Sailors were expected to rescue each other!
- Sailing clothing was very primitive. Wet suits and booties were nonexistent. So early and late season sailing was not for the faint of heart!

shore of the lake. By keeping their boats at their cottages this eliminated the problem of the RCNSA base behind the Moonlight Bay trestle.

The commissioning of the new Calgary Power Wabamun power plant created a new problem for the Kapasiwin sailors. Weeds began to appear in vast quantities in the newly warmed waters of the east end of the lake.

In 1959 another exciting boat appeared at Wabamun. It was the 20 foot new Olympic class called the Flying Dutchman. Seven of them were brought over from Italy for members of the EYC. They really caught the eye of a number of RCNSA members.

By 1959, a number of members of RCNSA with cottages along the northern shore began to consider forming their own club. Kapasiwin was becoming weed infested and they needed a new location too.