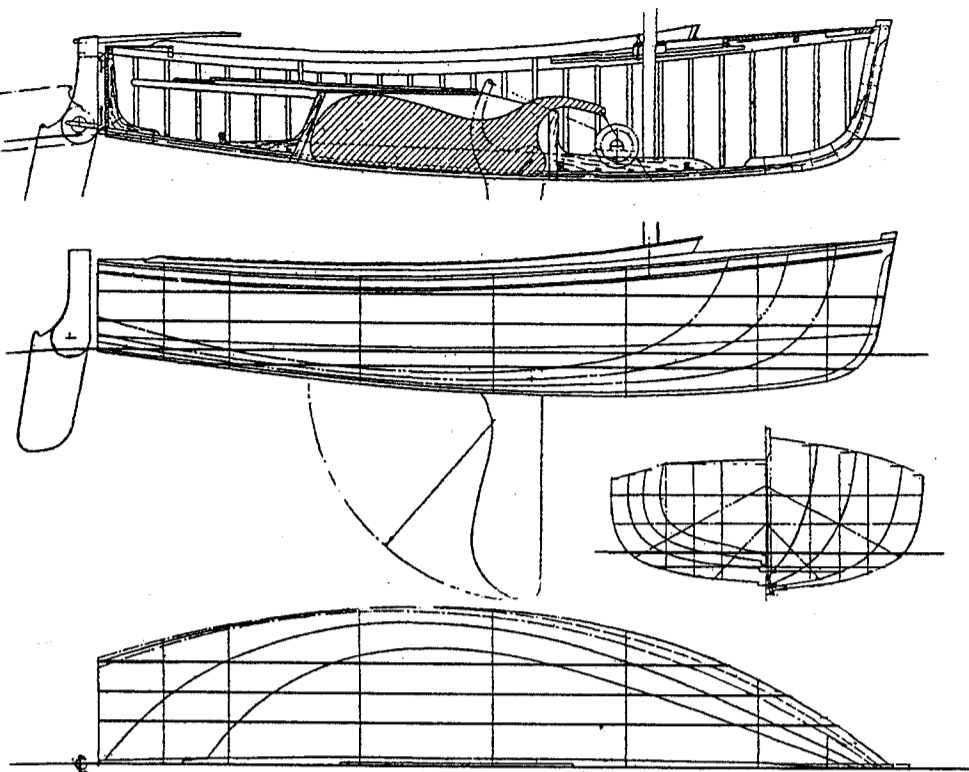
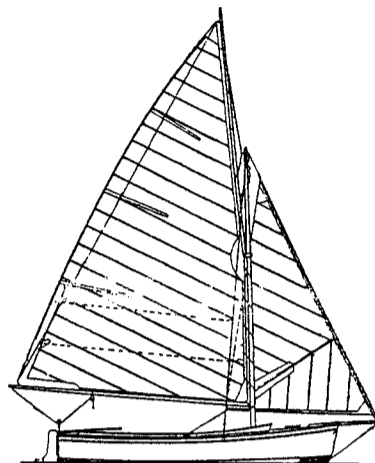


his career on the East Coast, embraced the great transition from wood to glassfibre Islands, long after most would have hung up their splines for a well-earned retirement



Far left: Starfire of Kent was Buchanan's best boat, being made of teak on stainless steel frames in 1960. The 52ft yawl is now sailing in the Pacific. Below and left: the Blackwater dinghy, a 1940s 14-footer made for the often choppy waters of the Essex river of its name. It came with three different sail plans. Our picture is plan B with a bowsprit and gunter rig.



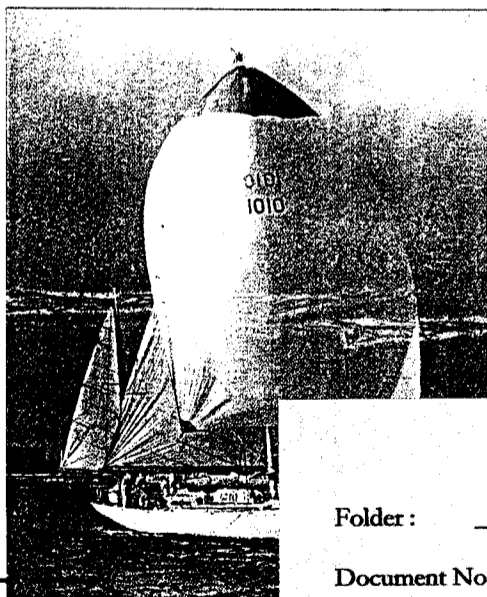
Over the Generations

was moving into building small yachts, oyster skiffs and other small boats and, with two young boatbuilders just back from war service, was taking orders as supply permits allowed. Alan quickly became their main provider of designs. The foundations of his long, distinguished career were laid.

Design competitions

In 1944 his design for the 4-ton bermudan cruising sloop *Puffin* was published in *Yachting Monthly* and attracted keen attention. The following year his 29ft 3in (8.9m) cruising sloop *Pintail* won second prize in that magazine's design competition for an estuary cruiser. In 1946 Maurice Griffiths, recently returned from naval service and *YM's* editor, commissioned Alan to design a 3-ton sloop, suitable for amateur building, having the characteristics of contemporary small yachts of good quality.

The result was 20ft overall, 17ft waterline, 7ft 1in beam (6.1 x 5.1 x 2.1m) and 3ft 6in draught, with a fixed keel, or 2ft 3in with centreplate (1m/0.7m). The cabin sides were carried out to the full hull breadth, providing more room for bunks, cooker, stowage and WC. The cockpit was 4ft (1.2m) long and a 4bhp Stuart Turner could be installed. It was a good small cruiser, although not many were built.



Another early design of Alan's, which I have admired for half a century, was the 14ft (4.2m) Blackwater dinghy, intended for the broad and often choppy waters of that Essex river.

At that time Alan owned a small gaff cutter. It was followed by a 22ft (6.7m) Falmouth Quay Punt and a 40ft (12.2m) Colchester smack. In the late 1940s he and his wife Pat owned *Karin III*, a Colin Archer type which they lived aboard while he was founding his business. Pat Buchanan's experience included voyaging on her father's 100ft (30.4m) motor yacht *Aldic* and racing her own *Dragon*. While living on board *Karin* they rebuilt another 6-Metre yacht for racing

locally. During the 1950s the business grew alongside Buchanan's reputation, and by the end of the decade he was running a sizeable office at Burnham, employing a team of around ten draughtsmen and engineers.

His training as an aircraft engineer helped considerably, giving him a design background where weight was kept to the minimum that structural strength would allow. This gave him an advantage over other designers who were less disciplined at keeping

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