**Sceptre’s History**

**1958**

The hull planking was completed on 12th February. The mast arrived at the yard from Camper and Nicholson’s on 29th March and following her launch on 2nd April, *Sceptre* first sailed on 11th April. Sea trials ran concurrently with crew training and hundreds of modifications for the next three months. On 3rd August she was loaded aboard SS Alsatia in Southampton, arriving in New York on 12th August. The first race of the America’s Cup series was on 20th September.

In the USA, after a series of trials between several possible yachts to defend the title, *Columbia* was chosen over *Vim, Easterner* and *Weatherley*. *Columbia* successfully defended *Sceptre*’s challenge, winning an emphatic four of the seven races, and America remained victorious.

*Sceptre’s* heavy defeat resulted in a great deal of disappointment in Britain, and its possible causes were much debated: the design, the sails, the crew… all came in for criticism, but it’s possible she was beaten by a combination of all these, together with rush to get a new yacht ready for the challenge.

Sceptre returned home in October, aboard the freighter Manipur which unfortunately ran into a gale, during which the yacht’s cradle broke. *Sceptre* fell against a ventilation pipe, damaging her hull and a hatch, and putting her future in some doubt. This event is remembered by Andrew Parks:

*She was stowed in a cradle on our after deck. Not surprisingly, the cradle was very high and there were beams right across Sceptre's deck whereby she was secured downwards to the ship. However, when Manipur rolled heavily in the storm after leaving New York it became evident that the cradle was not adequate for such sideways stresses and one side collapsed. Sceptre fell across the deck onto a ventilator and her bow was damaged. When we diverted to Halifax Nova Scotia to have Sceptre re-secured it made TV news here in Britain.*