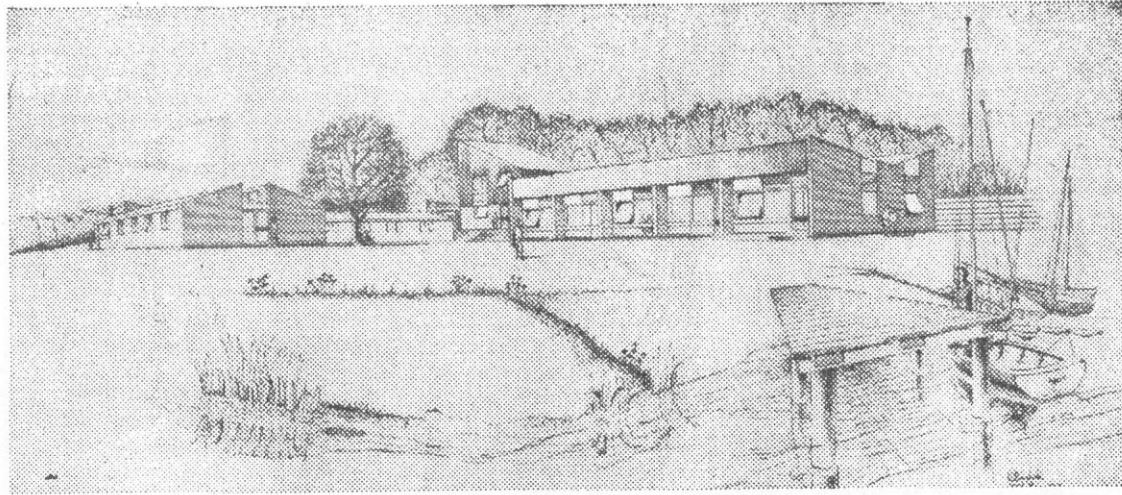


# It's a Christian sailing centre



This is what the Christian sailing centre will look like when completed. "No one will be barred," says Mr. Hester.

## Evening Standard

SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 1963

## ENGINEER PUTS ALL HE HAS INTO 'MISSIONARY' PLAN

Evening Standard Reporter

**A** young research engineer who wants to "relate the Christian way of life to every day and not just Sundays," is converting a three-acre site of scrub on the River Medina at Dodnor, near Newport, Isle of Wight, into what he hopes is the world's first Christian sailing centre.

Mr. Donald Hester, 31, gave up his job last October and sold his home at Hemel Hempstead to sink all he has into the venture. It has a Board of Reference of well-known churchmen and businessmen.

Now, with the help of his wife Valerie and secretary Elizabeth and a South African ex-Navy bosun, Dick Young, the 700ft. frontage on the river is rapidly changing shape.

Levels have been altered, a concrete slipway laid and a workshop and store built. The centre will open on a limited scale before Whitsun and by August it is hoped to cater for 40 young people each week.

When the £35,000 scheme is completed, it may accommodate 120 to 140 each week.

### Christian cruises

Mr. Hester ran a mission church at Hemel Hempstead. He and his wife are keen on yachting and in recent years have run a pilot scheme taking parties of young people on the auxiliary yacht Tectona on cruises to the Brittany coast and the Channel Isles. The cruises have a Christian background.

He said: At this centre we shall be completely interdenominational.

"We shall not bar anyone, but we shall set a standard of behaviour and expect whoever comes will have the courtesy to

listen to us in the evenings at our evangelical meetings."

The centre's fleet consists of folkboats, GP 14 sailing dinghies and a powerful rescue launch.

### 'Our faith'

The Board of Reference includes Mr. Ernest Shippam of the food firm; Mr. M. Laing, managing director of the John Laing organisation and the Rev. A. Morgan Derham, editorial secretary of the Childrens Special Service Mission.

Mr. Hester said: "As we have gone along, so we have been financed. It would be wrong to say that any one individual is behind us.

"We have the support of a Board of Reference, but the venture rests solely on the shoulders of my wife and I. It is the tangible evidence of our faith."

The all-in cost of holidays at the centre will be from 12 to 18 guineas a week. Up to 17 per cent discount will be given to parties from youth clubs and church organisations.