



Y.M.Y.C.

A brief history of the York Motor Yacht Club

By

Pat Morris

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I'd like to say a sincere thank you to present and former members for their stories, memories and photo's for this brief history. You are too numerous to mention individually, but your contributions are greatly appreciated.

Pat

CHAPTER 1

The origin of the club, 1933

The records of the York Motor Yacht Club (YMYC) were, for many years, kept in a tumbledown hut in the paddock behind the clubhouse. It was not a pleasant sight when I first saw the damp decaying parcels of old brown paper and started to unwrap and reveal the mountain of evil smelling contents. Some of the records and books had been effectively destroyed by floodwater in November 2000, the high tide mark being clearly visible through the various layers of packages. All that could be saved has now been placed for safekeeping in the City of York City Archive, and can be viewed by any person on request with the permission of the General Committee. This was the inauspicious beginning of the research for this book. Wherever possible, events have been cross-referenced with other sources in an attempt to fill in gaps and produce the most certain record of club history.

York Motor Boat Club, as it was originally named, was formed on June 3rd, 1933. Amongst the numerous records which belong to the York Motor Boat Club, is an unsigned report written in the 1960's. It does not give any real history of the club, but it does give us an insight to our origins. It tells of a chance meeting in the early part of 1933, on the river front at Hill's boatyard, near Lendal Bridge, York. A group of boat owners were chatting away and during the conversation a Mr Allen and a Mr Fred Sturdy fired each other up with so much enthusiasm that they convened a proper meeting to form a boat club.

It is clear from the terminology used that the founding members consulted the then current RYA model constitution for a yacht club in adapting the RYA model to YMBC requirements it is not however certain when this took place.

The club is therefore run on democratic principles and any owner of a motor Yacht may apply to join. Each boat has a single vote, that vote is vested in the owner of the boat known as the full member for use at an AGM or special meeting. In cases of a boat held in partnership only one partner may be nominated to vote. As most boats are owned by men the club inadvertently takes on a somewhat chauvinistic appearance this is inevitable however as there have in fact been very few lady boat owners, and only one in recent times. So come on you ladies get a boat get a vote and have your opinions and voices more readily heard.

Each year as required under the constitution the AGM is convened in late February or early March. Each committee member submits his report on the past year in his area of responsibility each is put to the vote for the acceptance of the membership.

Any rule changes or changes to standing orders are proposed seconded and voted into effect or rejected at this time. Officers of the Club and members of the General Committee are elected from those full members who chose to stand and offer their services in the best interest of the club. All is done on the basis of one vote per boat by the raising of voting cards issued on entry to paid-up full members of the club. In recent times a system of proxy voting has been introduced to enable those members absent with good reason to vote.

The hand written minute book of the first committee meetings of the York Motor Boat Club has survived intact and records the very first meeting on June 3rd 1933 at the Windmill Hotel on Blossom Street in York. The names of all the founding members and their boats are listed. Mr Allen was elected the first Commodore and Mr Sturdy was elected as the first Secretary. One of the founding members present was Charlie Popple, who together with his wife Auria Popple later became Vice-Presidents of the Club. They are now jointly commemorated on a seat presented by the family, now placed on the boardwalk outside the clubhouse. Recently a member was approached by a relative of Mr Allen who gave him some photographs of Mr Allen; and a copy of a letter from the New York Yacht Club. Mr. Allen had contacted the New York Yacht Club in 1935, from the ship on which he was a passenger, when approaching New York harbour.



The Windmill Hotel – where it all started

In the first few years of the Club there was neither a clubhouse, nor moorings as we know them today. The members simply moored their boats to the river bank, where they socialised on each others boats, or round camp fires ashore in the summer. In a press interview many years later, Charlie Popple said that there were only about 40 boats in total regularly using the river when they formed the club.

The boating season was much shorter in the early years as there were no pontoons on the moorings, and because members were rightly wary of rising water levels. Boats were lifted onto the hardstanding much earlier and returned to the water much later. In those early years, most of the boats were converted lifeboats, salvaged from ocean going vessels which had been scrapped. Members would travel by train to breakers yards in Whitehaven or Shields and for £10 bought open life boats which they would then convert to cabin cruisers. One of our present members, Denis Smillie, owned a boat called "Tonkers" which was formerly lifeboat number 30 from Mauritania III. Dennis's boat caught fire in 2002; whilst moored on his pontoon at the club and sadly was burnt out. He was very fortunate that he was not asleep on the boat at the time and tried in vain to put out the flames when he discovered the fire. His was the last converted lifeboat in the club from that era.

By 1935 the City Council began to realise that the presence of a boat club was a useful asset to the City, and they began a tradition in York by providing illumination for the boats for National events. The first one was the Silver Jubilee in 1935, club boats were allocated a position near Lendal Bridge and the Council supplied what is described as decorative strip lighting at a charge of 5 shillings per 50 yards. The bulbs were supplied free of charge but members were charged one shilling each if they broke one. The electricity was provided free of charge by the council. In 1936 for the Coronation of King George V and Queen Elizabeth the tradition was repeated, and was kept up through various Jubilees, historic events and the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

At the outset the Commodore chaired the meetings of the General Committee but it was soon decided that a club president was required.

In selecting a president for the club in 1933, the club looked to the City of York and chose Alderman Henry Rhodes Brown J.P. who was Lord Mayor of York at that time. At the end of his term as President the committee approached the next Lord Mayor to take over, but he and future Mayors had accumulated too many civic commitments, and declined the post. Some years later another Lord Mayor found he had time to become our President. The practice is now to elect our President from within the club.

The design of the club burgee was established during the first few months of 1933. The committee members decided to approach the City Council and ask for permission to use the City Coat of Arms on the burgee. The City Council refused to allow their crest to be used formally, but said the Club could use it for decorative purposes only, so they did! That was how we got round being given permission to use the Coat of Arms our burgee looks very decorative and colourful as a result. To this day we still fly the Club burgee with the York City Coat of Arms embroidered neatly on it.

A Ladies Committee was formed in 1937. Their main function was to provide catering facilities at social events as required, and to assist the men when needed. Until the Clubhouse was built there was not much that the ladies could do, as there was; of course no galley.

CHAPTER 2

The Trustees

At the outset the club had no assets. River bank space was first leased in 1933 from Yorkshire Water, making it necessary to appoint a board of Trustees in whose names the lease could be held for the benefit of the club. This collective form of ownership in trust is designed to prevent the assets of the club from being diverted to the benefit of any group or individual. Further river frontage was later leased from York City Council, and later still the portion of land upon which the club house stands was purchased from Yorkshire Water. These and all other assets of the club are held in the joint names of the board of trustees.

Trustees are respected long standing members of the Club nominated by the General Committee and elected to serve as Trustees by the membership at the Annual General Meeting.

Trustees at the time of going to press with this history of the club are Trevor Broadley (Chair) Ian Grewer, Ken Austwick and Mike Brown.

CHAPTER 3

The war years 1939 – 1945

When war broke out in 1939, the Club remained open but boatyards closed and sources of supply for spares vanished. Therefore; in true pioneering spirit; members made their own spares and did all their own repairs. It was literally make do and mend in every sense. During the war years, meagre rations of fuel for the boats were allegedly supplemented from the black market, or from moonlight transactions with local farmers.

Members seldom ventured beyond Naburn lock during the war and in any case, downstream of Naburn was considered to be foreign parts by the 'elders' of the club until quite some years later.

In researching the history of the club, records have been discovered which confirm precise dates for known events and provide a fascinating insight into early boating activity, in particular during the war years. For example, an Immobilisation Order from the government, intended to prevent craft on inland waters from being used by an invading enemy, has been found. Also a letter of apology from a supplier of flags in Hull for the late delivery of an order, this being due to a forced move of his premises as a result of enemy action.

VESSELS ON INLAND WATERS (IMMOBILISATION) ORDER, 1940

In pursuance of the powers conferred upon me by Regulation 19C of the Defence (General) Regulations, 1939, I hereby order as follows:—

1. (1) Subject as hereinafter provided, a vessel on any inland waters or on any land adjacent thereto shall not be unattended unless:—

- (a) in the case of a steam vessel, the main throttle valve cover plate and spindle or some other essential part of the propelling machinery and any replacement part of the said plate and spindle or other essential part have been removed from the vessel so as to render the machinery incapable of use;
- (b) in the case of a motor vessel, the distributor arm of the fanion or a fuel injection valve of a Diesel engine or some other essential part of the propelling machinery and any replacement part of the said arm, valve or other essential part have been removed from the vessel so as to render the machinery incapable of use;
- (c) in the case of a sailing vessel of which the mast or masts are fixed and of which the sails cannot be removed by one man, the wheel or the tiller or a part of the rudder chain or of the screw gear or some other essential part of the steering gear has been removed from the vessel so as to render the said wheel, tiller, chains or gear incapable of use and, in addition, an essential part of any windlass or sail hoisting winch has been removed from the vessel;
- (d) in the case of any other sailing vessel, all oars, rowlocks, rudders, tillers and sails, other than sails need to spars, have been removed from the vessel; and
- (e) in the case of a rowing boat, punt or canoe, all oars, poles, paddles, rowlocks, rudders, painters, masts and sails have been removed from the vessel;

Provided that the foregoing requirements shall not apply if:—

- (i) in the case of a steam vessel or motor vessel, an adequate and substantial locking device has been applied to the mechanism so as to render the mechanism incapable of being used without removing the locking device and the locking device has been locked and the key has been taken away and is kept in safe custody; or
- (ii) in the case of a vessel in enclosed premises, all entrances to the premises through which the vessel could be removed are closed by doors or other barriers sufficient to prevent the removal of the vessel and the doors or other barriers have been locked and the keys have been taken away and are kept in safe custody.

(2) Any article which is required by the foregoing paragraph to be removed from a vessel shall be stored in a place of security.

(3) For the purposes of this Article, a vessel shall be deemed to be unattended unless a person, not being a person under the age of fourteen years, is in attendance on the vessel either in the vessel or in the immediate vicinity and sight of the vessel.

2. Nothing in this Order shall apply to any vessel employed for the purposes of His Majesty's forces or of the police or of a fire service or as an ambulance.

3. In this Order the expression "inland waters" does not include any artificial or ornamental water or any waters to which the Vessels Immobilisation Order, 1940*, applies, but otherwise includes any canal, navigable river, lake or broad.

4. This Order may be cited as the Vessels on Inland Waters (Immobilisation) Order, 1940.

(Sgd) JOHN ANDERSON,

Minister of Home Security.

Witnessed,

20th JULY 1940.

*NOTE.—In general terms the Vessels Immobilisation Order, 1940, made by Command of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty on 9th July, 1940, applies to all coastal and tidal waters, and the present Order applies to non-tidal waters.

It was decided that any member on active service, who joined the forces during the war, would be given free membership for the duration (but mooring charges had to still be paid). In 1941 there was an agreement to reduce the size of the General Committee to three members for the duration of the War. Unfortunately the selling of boats became a problem. Members were selling their boats and the new owners were taking over the moorings which had been allocated to the sellers. There were only three committee members to oversee the running of the club, and to enforce the moorings list. They evidently had their work cut out chasing up the parties involved in each case of unconstitutional transfer of moorings.

In 1943 the City Police asked the club to provide a ferry service for the Home Guard in the event of the City bridges being damaged by enemy action. Unfortunately it was not considered practicable by the committee to do this.

In 1945 a certain Sergeant Griffiths of the R.A.F. stationed at Selby asked if instruction on landing boats could be obtained through the Club, this had to be refused because the petrol needed for this purpose could not be obtained. Petrol was very scarce, as members were strictly rationed by a scale depending on the horsepower of the boat in question. The petrol rationing scale was still in force in 1946.

At the end of the war in 1945, the Club had increased to 64 members. By the first post war A.G.M. in 1946, there were 57 members, thirty of whom were boat owners, and ten were away in the forces. The Lord Mayor of York was invited to take up the Presidency of the Club, and this time he accepted it. During the war all road signs and notice boards had been taken down in case the German forces landed here to make it more difficult for them to move around the country. The Club name boards were also taken down, and after the war, one of the members, a Mr Powell, sign writer by trade, produced lettering on the new boards.

The members who attended the first post war A.G.M. in 1946 accorded a vote of thanks to those members who had kept the club running throughout the hostilities.

CHAPTER 4

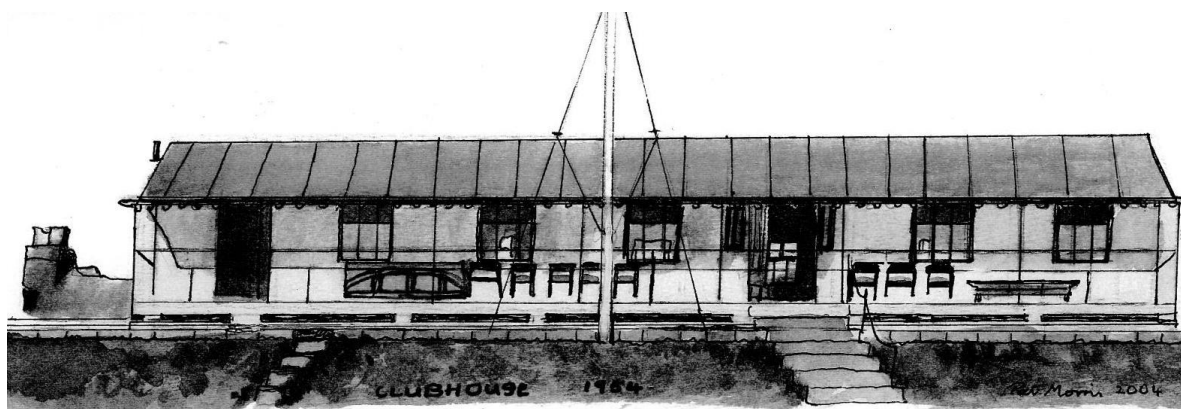
1951 – Establishment of the club house

One of the earlier ideas for a clubhouse was to take over the Ouse Bridge Inn, faced with closure at the time, being allegedly a house of ill repute. Charlie Popple had heard that it would become vacant in 1950 and the idea was that the Club would retain the pub licence, and the members would moor at King's Staith to attend the meetings and functions of the club. When Charlie made further inquiries on behalf of the club, however, he found that the brewery and landlord intended to rename the pub The King's Arms, renew the licence and retain the property. Having created a new image for the pub and obscured it's somewhat murky past the King's Arms was no longer destined to fall into our hands, but what a prospect it must have seemed at the time. If it had come to pass the mind boggles as to what the state of affairs would now be at King's Staith!

Over the years a few suggestions were made to use local buildings as a club house. One was to take over Naburn Hall. That wasn't considered to be practical because it was so large, and also because it flooded when the river rose. Another idea was to

rent a house with river frontage, or even to rent the old boiler house at the pumping station, but that would prove too expensive. Another suggestion was to use an old railway carriage, and one seemingly desperate idea was to have a floating clubhouse on pontoons.

An insurance document from the archive confirms that the basic structure of the present clubhouse, referred to at the time as a pavilion, was bought in 1952. It had been a First World War field hospital, and was delivered from Cumberland to the present site by truck. Erection commenced that year but it took two years to complete. The club had electricity and water laid to it and the Club president, Burt Hudson, performed the opening ceremony in 1954.



The clubhouse opening in 1954 – complete with Sea Scouts

The Clubhouse was partitioned off internally to conserve heat. Jenny Grewer, who was the Secretary for some years, recalls that the members met on Tuesday nights,

winter and summer. In winter, dividing screens were erected in the centre, making a smaller area to heat, and in which to sit in warmth and comfort. The men gathered round one single fireplace and talked about boats, and the women gathered round the second fireplace with their knitting and provided tea and biscuits for all.

There was a bar billiards table at which men and women played, and matches were arranged. There was a table tennis table for the youngsters at the other end behind a screen, and a locked "bar cupboard" in the middle, from which bottled beer was served by the members, who took it in turns to hold the key.

The younger element of the Club referred to Tuesday night with the "Elders" as "Old fogies," night. Eventually a Portacabin was provided with toys and books so the children had somewhere to go and play. In the early days there was always concern that the Club would turn into just a social club with the men wallowing in nostalgia with their boating yarns and the women sitting separately with their knitting. With the introduction of progressively larger boats, time moved on and so did the members. The Club strives to strike a balance between boating and socialising, and we now hope we have the correct formula.

CHAPTER 5

The Fifties

By 1949 the Club membership had risen, to 98 and during the following decade of rapid growth included, in 1953, the parents of actress Dame Judy Dench. Their original membership application form survives, now preserved in the York City Archive. Her father had a boat called Le Bigorneau, and her brother Peter Dench, who still resides in York, remembers it was a converted lifeboat like so many others of that era. The Dench family did not venture to those foreign parts below Naburn lock with their boat, but Peter does remember enjoying trips to Linton Lock and other places on the non-tidal stretch with the family. Unfortunately Peter says that many of the photographs that would have been taken at that time were destroyed in a fire, so there are none of the boat and it's crew.

Eric Grewer and his family joined about 1956. The Grewer family now headed by Eric's son Ian are still very active members and Ian, now a trustee of the Club, has the distinction of being the longest continuous serving member in the Club's history. In true pioneering spirit, the Grewer family's first boat was an old open fishing coble purchased in Bridlington, brought to York, and converted into a cabin cruiser by the family. Eric is remembered as a great committee man who seems to have held all of the administrative posts within the club with the exception of Commodore. He was reputedly a great motivator and arbitrator and a great asset to the club. As a mark of the esteem in which he was held, the first of the two conservatory extensions to the club house bears the name Grewer, a very likable man, now sadly no longer with us.

In 1954 there was a suggestion that the club should appoint a caretaker, who would be paid £26 per year. This never happened, as no-one would take the job for so little money.

In 1957, on the 24th June, Uffa Fox visited the Club to give a lecture. Uffa Fox was born in 1898 and grew up on the Isle of Wight. He completed a seven year apprenticeship in shipbuilding and opened his own business designing and building boats for the leisure industry at the age of 21. He also wrote books on the subject. During the Second World War he designed and built the Airborne Lifeboat which

was carried beneath marine reconnaissance aircraft and which was dropped by parachute to survivors at sea and saved many lives. He married a French lady in 1956, and had a French address at the head of his notepaper. It was quite a coup to have such a prestigious person visiting our little club. The visit came about through his nephew S.A.C. Dixon, stationed at RAF Dishforth, a few miles from York.

Dixon was asked by Flight Officer Stead, who was believed to be a YMBC member also stationed at Dishforth, whether Uffa Fox would give a lecture while on his way to the Clyde Week yacht races in Scotland. This would break the journey for Uffa as he would spend the night in York at the Royal Station Hotel, and continue the next day to Glasgow. There had been a change in the arrangements as the date first given for the lecture was June the 27th. Uffa had to be back in Cowes earlier than planned, and because of the date change, we have two signed letters in our files from Uffa. There were 150 applications for tickets for the lecture, so attendance was restricted to club members only. It was obviously a very popular event.

In the late Fifties, Ralph Pollard and his wife joined, and were keen members of the club. His boat Fingala was a thirty-foot, 2/4 berth vessel powered by a tractor engine running on TVO (Tractor Vapourising Oil) and petrol. It had been converted from sail having had a keel. A wheelhouse was added, and pig-iron was put in the bilge to provide stability. Ralph frequently cruised on the Ouse below Naburn, the Trent, the canals, and across the Wash. He once collided with a petrol barge on the Trent, and felt he had to tie up to it for the night because he was frightened of sinking. He was lucky that the barge did not blow up! His grandchildren often sailed with him, and remember patching the exhaust silencer, and hand pumping the bilge before a run up the river. They enjoyed the social life of the club too. Later, In the 1960s, Ralph had three passenger boats at Bishopthorpe competing with Hills Trip boats.

CHAPTER 6

The Sixties and Seventies

By 1960, member's boats were becoming much larger, and there was increasing use of fibreglass as the main construction material. The club elders scornfully referred to these boats as 'floating bath tubs'. Eventually when fibreglass boats outnumbered wooden ones, people began to complain about the noise made at weekends by all the drilling and hammering on the wooden boats. A total ban was put on the use of machine tools at weekends, and such work had to be done during the week.

With increasing prosperity and increasing leisure time the club swelled to a total of 428 members by 1962.

In the early days before there was a children's room, the children had to sit in the clubhouse with their parents, and if they did not behave well, they were sent to their boats. There was a system of baby sitting, and parents took it in turn to patrol the moorings checking on the children who were all sent to their boats at 9.00 p.m.

We did have one tragedy at the club when a little girl of ten drowned at the moorings at the front of the club. She had been wearing her lifejacket earlier in the day but had taken it off later. Her father was taking her back to their boat to put her to bed, but she had left a toy in the clubhouse. He went back for the toy. She went on and fell

between two moored boats. Sadly her father was too late to save her. Children are now required by Club rules to wear lifejackets at all times on the moorings and outside the clubhouse.

In 1968 the name of the Club was changed from York Motor Boat Club.

Jimmy Wallis, who was the President at the time, thought that yacht clubs could obtain grants from the Government or local authority, so he had the club name changed from York Motor Boat Club to York Motor Yacht Club. The presidents' expectation of grant aid however came to nothing, but the club decided to adopt the altered name anyway.

In 1972, the Government recommended that pleasure boats should have at least one qualified crew member on board, and the R.Y.A. set up courses in York. Jimmy Wallis was keen to help get these courses off the ground, but the Commodore; Ralph Eastwood; refused to let them use the clubhouse for lectures.

Peter Sheppherd ran these courses, which had to be re-located to York Technical College. Amazingly 200 people turned up to attend the first course. The practical training was conducted in the Humber outside Hull. Ex-naval Commander Bill Anderson from the R.Y.A. was one of the examiners, and Ian Grever was the first club member to succeed in getting his Yacht Masters Certificate. When York Technical College changed its' curriculum to vocational study, the course had to be moved and found a home at St John's College, also in York where Jimmy Wallis was asked to chair the committee. Peter withdrew from running the course and so did the Club as a whole. Peter then commenced VHF tuition, which was also a very popular course, and an examiner from Hull came to oversee the tuition and to examine students.

Santiago.

Santiago is Peter and Betty Sheppherd's boat. Built of wood, fifty feet in length and equipped with a coal fired Aga cooker and a substantial coal bunker she was bought in 1970 in Lancaster. They sailed her up the Irish Sea coast, through the Caledonian canal, into the North Sea, then on to York in December of that year. During the voyage they decided to go into Lossiemouth due to the bad weather and at that point took on a skipper, who subsequently was not deemed to be very good at his job. They thought he took them too far out to sea in the bad weather which later reached force 9. As it got rougher the Aga cooker on board started to hiss as sea water sprayed over it. They followed an oil rig supply boat into Aberdeen whose skipper told them later, that he had been watching them with interest as a small blip on his radar. The next day the Aga was found to have become encrusted with the salt which had dried over the hot plates, but it had remained lit. Peter and his family usually managed two holidays a year in "Santy" as she is called going many times to Jersey and to Europe. In 1984 they cruised as far as the Baltic. Compared to the fibre glass boats of today "Santy" is very slow and despite new engines only does a stately 9-10 knots. She was taken to Thorne every two years to have the boat equivalent of a face lift, and always had a remarkable sheen on her hull for such a craft.



Santiago passing Lendal Bridge, York

Many club members will be grateful to Peter for the knowledge he imparted to them over the years. He is sadly missed having passed away in 2007.

In the 1970's a popular trip for the Club members to make was to The Boat Show in London. They would go down to London by coach, and stay for a weekend or a few days, with their wives at a good hotel. Norville Jackson remembers such a trip taken one year. He and Arthur Morton were looking round the show with other members, when suddenly there was an announcement over the PA for all the visitors to leave the show as the I.R.A. had put a bomb on one of the small boats on display. Arthur and the Club members beat a hasty retreat to their hotel but Norville realised that they had all left without their coats. When it was declared safe, Norville went back to collect the coats, and had a real struggle as there were so many. He couldn't get them all into one taxi, so he had to flag down two. It became a case of "follow that car," in order to get both himself and the members' coats back to the hotel. At the end of the day though no one was injured by the bomb but most were just a little cold for a while!

Members still go to the various boat shows round the country, but tend to do so as individuals without any central organisation by the club. With the speed of present day railways, members often travel to boat shows by train in one day, returning the same evening.

CHAPTER 7

Food and Drink: The 1980's and 90's

Eventually in 1983 a bar steward was appointed. His name was Ernest Houghton. By all accounts the club members liked him as he made it unnecessary for the committee and club members to continue their rota system for manning the bar and selling Calor Gas, charts, burgees and other club memorabilia. Although the "Officer

of the Day” job seems to have been less binding on those involved, they still had to raise the flag in front of the club.

In 1987 at the A.G.M. it was announced that the clubhouse site had been bought from the Yorkshire Water Authority for £20,000 pounds. The club was £2,000 pounds short but it was given a working overdraft. The members felt that they could, with the help of fund raising events, get the club into the black and avoid bank charges on the overdraft. Eventually YMYC finances were brought under control again. When the members of the club had built the clubhouse, the social side of the club changed. They were able to have talks and film shows and also entertain members from other clubs. Members were able to meet up and exchange information. The wives felt more at home having somewhere to chat over a cup of tea, and friendships were forged between them.

In the early days of the Club galley the cooking was done by the members. With the opening of the clubhouse, the ladies took over the social side of the club (except for the formal functions held elsewhere). The events in the clubhouse included the very popular R.N.L.I. day, an annual event which was enjoyed by all the membership. The ladies did the cooking for these events in the galley, and this eventually led to regular meals being provided. In the 60's and 70's Betty Sheppherd and Jenny Grewer did the cooking every other weekend. The food was mainly from the freezer, and an average of 15-20 people ate from the galley every Sunday. The Club also organised meals where members brought along a variety of dishes, and everything was shared between them.

Another lady who did some of the cooking, even before Betty and Jenny, was Dorothy Savage. Her family ran Savage's Hotel in York. She did good roast dinners on Sundays. The members sat round the table tennis table, which could seat sixteen, and all the places were taken. Dorothy's boat, Collinette, was a Dutch Haag. She and her husband Vic travelled extensively in Collinette across the North Sea to Holland, and around Europe. At 42ft she was a big boat at that time.

There is a trophy, called the Collinette trophy, which is given once a year to lady member of the Club who has contributed most to the social life of the Club by working in the galley or organising social events. It used to be given to the lady with the most rally points, but it now is a valuable encouragement for the ladies to “get stuck in” and help. It is presented at the Annual Dinner which for some time was held at the racecourse, but in recent years the venue has been the Pavilion Hotel Fulford, York. The Savages spent a great deal of time working on Collinette, and as a result she was a very well prepared boat. It was therefore a very sad day when Collinette caught fire and sank. There was no actual proof of how the fire started, but it is alleged that squatters were to blame. At the same time another boat from the club; Sunan, was found half submerged and could not be saved. She ended her days with the dubious honour of being the first boat to be used in the revived Viking boat burning ceremony in the centre of York, a sad ending for both boats.



YMYC Clubhouse refurbishment

The Galley is now run by catering staff on Friday and/or Saturday night in season and sometimes Sunday brunch. We also arrange to hold barbecues cooked by the members and the occasional buffet for a special event. Saturday nights are often the evenings when a singer or group will entertain the club members. These entertainers are funded by the club, usually a raffle is held on the night to cover expenses. The members have a good time and some are even known to get up and dance with their wives! A few members have talent themselves and perform for us, one popular group are girl dancers; these are members' children, and they do a special routine of dancing and gymnastic floor exercises. In such a limited space it must be difficult for them. The food put on by the galley, brings the membership in to spend money behind the bar where essential profit is made. A great deal of the club funding is raised by this method to pay for the expense of running the club. Our bar is still run by a committee of volunteers, and the landlord of the Kings Arms organises a member of his staff to serve behind the bar when they are needed.

CHAPTER 8

The present day

At the beginning of every season the annual general meeting of the club is held in the clubhouse in February or early March. At this meeting the members elect the officers of the club and members of the general committee. The elected committee members thereafter form their own sub-committees to attend to the day to day running of the club. The first General Committee meeting is convened on the first

Thursday after the AGM, with subsequent meetings held in the club house at two month intervals throughout the year.

The structure of the Club building has been changed a great deal over the years. It has had extensions put on the back and conservatories added to the front.

By New Year 2002, the club had saved enough money to re-furbish the frontage and interior. The then President, Les Grainger, organised this refurbishment, devoting much of his time and energy to the project. The General committee engaged Terry Harper, a member who was a builder, to undertake the structural work. A band of, "willing" volunteers worked with Terry and his son Peter, and knocked the building into its present shape in a remarkably short period of time. In order to keep the original atmosphere, old beams and pillars were retained and the pennants given by other clubs were pinned to the ceiling. The bar interior was re-furbished and everything was given a lick of paint or wallpapered. The club was officially re-opened on the 28th of April 2002, by Mr Ray Bulman from 'Motor Boat and Yachting' Magazine.

At the time of writing, the Club is again in the process of having some renovation work done at the back of the clubhouse and a major refurbishment of the galley.

The finances of the club have been stretched to the limit to cover projected costs under the ever watchful eye of the treasurer of the day David Boddy.

We hope that members will appreciate the effort which has gone into making our clubhouse one of York's most attractive riverside venues where they can enjoy a good meal and a few jars and relate their adventures on returning from voyages to foreign parts.

The clubhouse certainly looks very different inside and out from the day Burt Hudson cut the inaugural ribbon in 1954. A lot of water has flowed under the York bridges and facilities for members have improved immeasurably since that first meeting at the Windmill Hotel when the founders of the club met in 1933 to form the club.

CHAPTER 9

The Seventieth birthday

By 2003 we had already begun the task of organising our 70th Birthday and we celebrated with pride our 70 years of history.

It was a beautiful sunny day. Members were still recovering from the night before, having witnessed a five man team doing the YMYC version of "The Full Monty" in the Clubhouse. We also enjoyed the athletic dancing of our talented young girl members, the monologues and banjo playing of Jack Bean and the guitar playing and singing of Brian Hutchinson and his sister Diane, all of whom entertained us so well. It was an evening of sheer talent. On Saturday we had booked Clare Frisby from B.B.C. 'Look North' to open the proceedings and Elsa who was Chair Person of the 70's committee went into York with her fiancé Bill Scales on their boat Kahluah to collect her. The Commodore Keith Lavender also took his boat Hot Property to collect the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress. Clare Frisby arrived amongst much cheering and waving by the assembled crowd. She was sensibly dressed for boating in an elegant pair of honey coloured slacks and top. My husband Club President Glyn Morris, and I were waiting on the boardwalk at the entrance of the club to

welcome her. Glyn made a short speech, (thank goodness!) and handed the microphone to Clare, who in her own charming way said just the right things. The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress then arrived and all the introductions were made and the festivities began. All the preparations of the organising committee began to take shape, the Sea Scouts took to their little boat and set off to position course markers for a boat handling event, the stalls opened in the club grounds, (the tombola always does well.) The R.N.L.I. stall is always a must for boating fanatics and is always well attended. The jazz ensemble began their music and the jugglers juggled! The assembled guests began to tour the stalls and Glyn climbed onto the RIB brought by the Coastguards to examine their navigational instruments. I had to prise him off it to attend the lunch. Clare Frisby, the Lord and Lady Mayoress and some of the members of the 70's committee; with the elders of the club and their wives; were invited to a special lunch held in one of the conservatories at the front of the Club. It was a cheerful meal with plenty of laughter, good food, good company and of course good wine. Our guests left during the afternoon and the rest of the day was taken up by the competitions. By early evening everyone seemed to be hungry again and we all tucked in to a delicious buffet provided by the club and were entertained by a singer/comedian until the sun went down. We finished off with a wonderful firework display, set up by Tom Barker Vice Commodore of the day.

On Sunday, following earlier heats, the finals of the competitions were held. The members did some "welly" throwing; but the egg throwing was off as no one bought any eggs! There were teams for the five-a-side football, which the ladies won, because they held the most goals when the rain came down just before 4 00pm. The heavens really opened. Everyone dashed inside for the prize giving, the most popular prize being the 70th Anniversary mug. A consignment of these commemorative mugs was provided by John Worsdale, then bar chairman and owner of Eastgate Potteries, for sale to boost club funds. Much admired on the day, the mugs may in time be worth a small fortune on 'The Antiques Road Show'. Elsa Scales, our 70's Chair Person brought the proceedings to a close, and we all breathed a sigh of relief that it was all over. The icing on the cake though was that, after all the sums were done, we made a big profit for the club, and we hope it will encourage the members' children to continue the spirit of our club, and hopefully continue their interest in boating. We just hope that the ones whose Dads did the "Full Monty" will not be embarrassed for life! The whole weekend had taken a lot of organising and we can all be proud of our success.

Chapter 10

Faolinn: A venerable vessel

The oldest surviving boat, which has recently left the club, is Faolinn, introduced to the club by founder member W. Peterkin in 1933. She was a replacement for his previous boat called Orient, which is recorded as his founder boat. Faolinn, unfortunately, was therefore not owned by Mr Peterkin at the time when the club was formed, but must have arrived in York sometime later in the same year. She was sold to Arthur Buckley, an early Commodore of the club, and now belongs to Stuart Hebden. Faolinn was built on the Clyde in 1920 for a Glasgow wine merchant. Her early history and details are recorded, with an original drawing of her structure.

Stuart's father Norman Hebden ran the boatyard at Acaster Malbis. Unfortunately this boatyard is now long gone, but Stuart still uses the skills he learnt from his father to restore and maintain Faolinn. He is now involved in repairing her engine, a 2.2 litre BMC Commander Diesel, and also has plans to renew some of the rubbing strake. Her old brass compass, thought to be the original, has a paraffin lamp inside and is still in working order, but is no longer kept on board, Stuart having replaced it with a more modern one. Faolinn was on the reserve list for the North East of England for craft to participate in the evacuation of Dunkirk during the war, but in the end wasn't called for that duty. This was just as well because she was designed as a riverboat and would not have been suitable for North Sea and English Channel operations.



Faolinn

In the early 1950's Arthur Buckley used Faolinn to tow the new Club pontoons to their present location at Fulford. We have an undated photograph of this event, also one of Charlie Popple and his son Michael taken on the new moorings at the same time. Stuart is very much aware of the importance of Faolinn and her history, which is so much part of the history of the Club as a whole.

Chapter 11

Linton lock

Linton Lock was built in 1767 to provide a vital link for commercial navigation between Ripon and the Humber. This link provided a thriving two way trade in coal, livestock, agricultural products, and building supplies. By the beginning of the 20th Century the commercial traffic through the lock began to decline, other forms of transport, particularly the railways, were proving faster and more convenient. By the 1950's Linton lock was in such decline that the Commissioners of the lock promoted the foundation of a supporters club to ensure that funds would be available to do repairs. They also introduced a toll for pleasure boats using the lock to supplement the declining revenue from commercial traffic.

Over the years many of the YMYC and Ripon Boat Club members engaged in working parties to ensure that the lock remained open. Some of the presidents who were very active in co-ordinating the preservation of the lock were Norville Jackson, Jimmy Wallis and David Cocker. They each in turn were Chairmen of the board of Linton Lock Commissioners for many years.

To raise funds for Linton Lock, YMYC and Ripon Boat Club held joint rallies, meeting half way at the lock. These were very popular. They held boat handling competitions and barbeques, and the members would often stay the night.

From 1950's through to the 1980's the lock had to be closed for repairs on at least three occasions, when in the 1980's major engineering faults developed, David Cocker and the Commissioners were faced with finding more than a million pounds for repairs.

In the 1990's the Commissioners made a successful application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, and as a direct result the lock has now been repaired. With such major structural work, landscaping, and improvements to moorings, the future of the lock is now secure. On completion of the work there was a ceremony to hand over the running of the lock to British Waterways Board. This took place on 1st October 1999. The press and T.V. were there, and David can now enjoy a well earned rest. Ironically his boat Ocean Crest is too large to get anywhere near Linton Lock, and will therefore never be likely to use the lock!

CHAPTER 12

Rallies and Events

From its inception in 1933, the Club has held rallies, where members and their boats cruise in company to a chosen destination or event. These may be upstream of Naburn Lock or in tidal waters, and are all organised by the Commodore. The elders of the Club have over the years, provided silver cups and other trophies for these rallies and other achievements of the members. The commodore is assisted in his duties by his Vice Commodore and Rear Commodore, who are known as flag officers. The names of the Commodores are recorded on the ships wheel in the clubhouse. One of our earlier Commodores was Jimmy Wallis. He was a stickler for protocol and he insisted that the boats taking part in his rallies were all given a number. The boats would leave the club consecutively, in numerical order, and for the whole trip, even when they went in and out of a lock they had to remain in order. Jimmy was also keen to have the flag officer of the day on duty whenever the members were present at the club. A list of flag officers duty days was drawn up at the beginning of each season, and their duties were to hoist the flags outside the club, to help with any problems and answer members questions, a tradition which survives to this day.

Rallies were always a popular way for the members to go boating together. In the days when few boats ventured below Naburn, many rallies took place upstream. The landlords of the pubs nearest the river would be given notice of the event days before the members set off in their boats, in order that they could provide lunch, or afternoon tea. The Alice Hawthorn at Nun Monkton was a popular place to have afternoon tea. We still have a menu from one of those events. Members would confirm in writing to the secretary if they were going to attend the rally or not. Even

for afternoon tea, they thought it important to get the numbers right. From its early days, the club has held Rallies to Bushy Close, which is upstream towards Poppleton. "Bushy" is owned by a local farmer and over the years subsequent farmers who have owned it have rented the river bank to us, to use as a rally venue. In 1958 the rent was £10, by the year 2003 the rent had risen to £800. This was far too much for the Club to pay, but fortunately we had an alternative. In 2003 the Island next to the cut at Naburn lock which is owned by British Waterways and now equipped with barbecue facilities, was opened to boaters and the general public. In view of this facility being available, it was decided to discontinue renting Bushy and use Naburn instead. Naburn Island has the extra bonus of being very flat, so ball games can be played.



Rally to Naburn Lock island

A previous Commodore; the late John Bulmer; was an enthusiastic rally man. He remembered taking as many as twenty-seven boats on a rally to Nun Monkton. As the Commodore, he recalled how hard it was to get working parties together, even in 1981 members did not want to work at the club, they wanted to relax on their boats and pay for professionals to do the jobs, just like many would prefer to do today.

In the days before video cameras, the members used cine cameras to record their events. The boating members made films of the rallies, and some months later, often in the winter, showed the films in the club. John Bulmer was a keen cameraman, and often did this.

One event worthy of mention in this section is the traditional garden party; held for many years at the clubhouse; for the benefit the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. It was therefore fitting that the R.N.L.I. had a display stand at the Clubhouse on the occasion of the Club's 70th birthday celebrations.

On the club bar we have a collection box in aid of the R.N.L.I. Members have been very generous over the years; they are all aware how important this service is to them.

One of our most popular venues for a rally is Glanford. For many boats and their skippers it is the first trip into the Humber. Glanford's regattas are all well organised and give inexperienced members a good introduction to boat handling. Many of the members of our club have come back with trophies from the competitions held at Glanford. In return Glanford comes to our club to compete against us, at our regattas.

The Club has traditionally held an annual dinner dance in the autumn in order to close the season and award the rally cups and cups for service to the club. Trevor Broadley for a long time has run this event, until his recent illness. He told me that the older long serving members of the club kept coming every single year, but the younger members even in the earlier days needed more persuading. In recent years this event has been held at the racecourse in one of their function rooms, a far better venue than some he remembers in the past. Many years ago he was told by Arthur Buckley that during the winter months, the elders would whittle and carve out boats from wood. These boats would be put at the on the tables at the dinner dance and the members would sit at the place where their named boat stood. Each member was allowed to take their boat with them when they left. This was a lovely tradition which unfortunately has gone, like many others. There was also a tradition at this dance that the ladies would never wear the same dress more than once at this event but unfortunately that tradition has now ceased!

We hope that the dinner dance will continue, and that the younger element of the club will want to dress up once a year instead of wearing their jeans for every event. More recently Christmas dinner, which is a regular feature in the social calendar, has been held in the clubhouse for the members. The members have sometimes called in outside caterers but they themselves decorate the club and the tables, and make the room and tree look magnificent.

CHAPTER 13

Moorings

In 1933 the club first leased the towpath and bank for moorings from the Pumping Station at Fulford. One shilling per foot was the quoted price. With more and more members requesting moorings, the club was continuously applying for mooring space as the membership grew. The Moorings Committee searched as far afield as Acaster Malbis, Beningbrough and Boroughbridge, and were for a short time renting moorings from River Craft at Boroughbridge. When River Craft closed in 1939 these moorings had to be vacated by December 31st. The Club settled in the end for just having moorings at the pumping station, with members finding their own private moorings elsewhere, and using the Club visitor's pontoons at weekends and for events.

Ian Grewer remembers that in the early days no one was allowed to have a pontoon on their mooring at the club; the only pontoons were for the visitors. He does not recall when pontoons were first allowed for the mooring members, but he has explained to me what the moorings were. Mooring was achieved by attaching the

boats to scaffold poles, which were secured via a swivel to strong-points on the bank. There was a rope and chain on the river end. A buoy, usually a fender, floated on the surface and was picked up with a boat hook, a rope was attached to the buoy, a chain was attached to the rope, and the scaffold pole was attached to the chain. The poles were drawn up to the deck level of the boat at the bow and stern. It does not sound a particularly safe way to moor but at least in the early days, the boats were generally smaller and less powerful.

The club has had to have mooring rules since it started in 1933. Members accept a licence from the club for the privilege of being able to moor and sign the licence before they are given their mooring. Members have to provide their own pontoon and walkway and are expected to keep them in a safe and tidy condition at all times.

Over the years, the pontoons outside the Club have had to be renewed. In the year 2000, the visitors pontoons in front of the club were renewed; under the chairmanship of Terry Hattersley; with the help of a working party of members. The new moorings consist of metal cages supported by floating plastic barrels, and a crane was hired to hoist them into position. The visiting members and guest boats from other clubs usually moor their boats on these pontoons on Friday nights, usually leaving on Sunday afternoon.



New pontoons being installed, Year 2000

CHAPTER 14

A selection of members voyages

This is just a handful of tales to give the readers an idea of what Club members can experience by taking a trip down the Humber (foreign parts) and going out to sea in a small boat. Every trip is different, no matter how many times you go.

Log of voyage by “Lady Barbara”, displacement 6 tons from Clifton ferry York to Immingham to tow motor torpedo boat MTB 767 back to Clifton.

At 51 tons displacement (minus engines) MTB 767 is probably the largest boat ever owned by a member.

In 1946, a New Zealander Mr L Buckby; a club member; who was stationed at Dishforth aerodrome, decided to buy a motor torpedo boat (MTB.) at Immingham and tow it to York for use as a house boat. His house had been bombed in London; and he and his wife wanted somewhere local to live. His friend in the club was Mr Frank Lowther, and it was Frank's boat; the “Lady Barbara”, that was to tow this gigantic beast up to York. This account is taken almost verbatim from the log of that journey, which I found hidden amongst club records. The log in some aspects is not as clear as it might have been but this perhaps enhances the humour of the adventure which is worth recounting, or even as a film “Carry on up the Ouse”.

Mr. L Buckby and Mr. F.L. Crowther

The names of the tug men are not recorded.

They left Clifton Ferry 10 pm Thursday, 14th March 1946. Lady Barbara was, towing the dinghy “Reme”, which was fully equipped in case of emergency. They stopped at Ouse Bridge for petrol; and to pick up Tom, an additional crew member. No petrol was available, and Tom arrived with the news that he couldn't accompany them. They set off again — moored again at Blue Bridge in search of petrol. Still none - but they bought a gasket for the engine and a jar of gasket glue. They set off again 1.50 p.m. The weather became fine and the visibility was quite clear. Arriving at Naburn Locks at 2.45 they went to see Mr Fewster the lock keeper. They discussed with him the ways and means of getting through locks with the M.T.B. He suggested they set off straight away as it was high tide instead of spending the night at Naburn as planned. They were charged for passing through the locks and, as they had no change, had to leave a £1 note. Leaving Naburn 5.15 p.m. and proceeded towards Selby as the next port of call. They passed the mouth of River Wharfe at 3.52 p.m. but there was trouble at 4.00 p.m. The steering cable had come undone. After repairing it they set off again at 4.07 p.m. They passed Cawood Bridge without mishap but the steering was still unsatisfactory so they dropped anchor at 4.15 p.m. and found a steering cable off its pulley in the stern locker. After rectifying this, they travelled down to Selby without further trouble; arriving at 5.55 p.m. Frank took the wheel from Blue Bridge to Selby. Just after they moored in between the road bridge and the railway bridge some tugs arrived pulling four full lighters. Each came through the bridges just after they moored. By now it was getting dark and they set off immediately into Selby to hunt for petrol. Having visited all the garages they were still unlucky, no petrol anywhere.

They decided to go back and have a wash and brush up and then hunt for food. They watched the two tugs returning with empty lighters; the tugs got through the road bridge but the railway bridge didn't open. The river was full of shipping which was swinging round very dangerously into current. After calling at several cafes including the Londesborough and George Hotels they were unable to get food so they bought Fish and Chips and took them back to the boat. When they had eaten, they walked to the road bridge, which is still a toll bridge. Having a conversation with one of the locals they learnt nothing about the size of the bridge, but the locals were able to tell them about signals for opening bridges - one long blast and six short ones. Returning to the ship they checked the engine; then went to bed.

Friday 15th March. They got up at 5.00 a.m. and had breakfast consisting of three duck eggs, and leaving the mooring at 7.00 a.m., Len took the wheel. There was high water at Selby at 7.25 a.m. It began snowing as they passed the mouth of the River Derwent at 8.12 a.m. Having passed through Ouse Railway Bridge 8.17 a.m., Asselby Island was then in view. Asselby Island is no longer an island, there is a channel remaining to one side, with the other side silted up and trees growing on it. Arriving there at 8.37 a.m. they found that on the bend of the island there was a felled tree half way across the river. They passed the mouth of River Aire which is short distance from Asselby Island. The river Aire had a sand bank in middle of the river mouth and there was another sand bank to starboard. They passed Boothferry Bridge 8.57 a.m. and proceed to a newly made Island formed in the previous few months. Keeping to the right hand side channel, they passed Goole Bridge 9.15 a.m. and went on to moor up at Victoria Pier, Goole. They enquired from an "old salt" on one of the "grabs" about petrol; and he offered to go with them to get it. Asking him about the local conditions, tides, etc. he said they should be alright so long as they kept in middle of the river. Arriving at the garage a mile away, they ordered 40 gallons of petrol, which meant four journeys to carry it back to Lady Barbara. The Captain of the "Grab" gave them the pattern of the channel lights. Then they set off for Immingham at 11.15 a.m. expecting to arrive there at approx. 5.00 p.m. They filled every available tin with petrol and passed the river Trent entering the Whitton Channel. There was a strong wind in the channel and they could hardly stand up on deck. Another gallon of petrol was put into the tank. They were shipping water through their portholes, and they realised that the galley was flooding. They came to three channel buoys and then they had to stop at 12.40 p.m. because the propeller shaft thrust block had worked loose. It was low tide and becoming foggy. Whilst attending to the thrust block, they drifted lightly onto a sandbank. Starting the engine again they found that the cooling water system, including the pump, was solid with sand. Throwing the anchor overboard they set to work; as the tide was now rising, they saw large boats passing on both sides but were too busy to spend time watching them. After struggling to free them selves from the sandbank they set off again at 4.05 p.m. Len took the wheel and Frank made tea as the weather cleared. Then Frank took the wheel and they went down the south channel round Read's Island. As they passed the Lock Inn at 4.57 p.m., there was a strong wind, their 'approx. speed 7 miles an hour.' At Barton on Humber they passed the next buoy at 5.53 then headed 'out to sea' for New Holland Pier. Arriving there at 6.06 p.m., they had petrol trouble and then stopped to clear a water pipe. The sea was pretty rough and they stopped again at North Killingholme Haven on account of more petrol trouble. They moored at 7.10 p.m. on the pier. It was becoming dark, and as Frank made coffee; he found pots and pans all over the galley floor. They couldn't stay there for the night as the waves were too rough. Len went out to see if there was

anyone on the pier - not a soul was in sight - but he noticed they had lost the dinghy "REME ". They set off again at 7.30 p.m., to hunt for three lighthouses along the Humber, Len at the wheel. It was blowing hard and the water was washing over the deck. They saw two lighthouses. Then coming into Immingham Haven they spotted Immingham Locks with a dredger at work outside. This was about 8.0 p.m. They were not able to make the lock keeper hear them, so Len climbed the lock gates, which were about 50 feet high, while Frank held on with a boat hook. Len contacted the lock keeper and asked if they could pass through. The keepers asked why they did not sound their horn. Len told them they had, and they asked what kind of a ship it was, as they hadn't heard anything, and they were astounded to see such a small boat bobbing about on the sea. However they were finally allowed to enter the locks. The lock chamber was 340 feet long by 90 feet wide. It can be imagined how small the, Lady Barbara looked in a lock of these dimensions. The water was let in very rapidly and the lock seemed so peaceful after the rough sea. After explaining their mission to the Commanding Officer they proceeded past large Liners to the M.T.B., the Lady Barbara coughing and spluttering again with a petrol blockage. She stopped within a few yards of M243 as if in sheer disgust at the size. They had quick look round her after mooring; then went to bed — both with splitting headaches due to the fumes, noise and vibration emanating from the engine.

Saturday 16th March. They woke at 10 a.m. having no water to make tea or to wash themselves, they spent two hours searching for fresh water on the M.T.B. When the tanks were found they were empty, so finally they had to turn on the fire hose on shore. They adjusted, oiled and greased the winch and attached the anchor. Then they went to dinner at the LNER (Railway) Hotel. This hotel was the centre of attraction at Immingham and they both admired the graining of the interior woodwork. Dinner consisted of soup, meat pie, five vegetables, a sweet and coffee. They made arrangements for supper at 8 p.m. then returned to the M.T.B and took down the mast, cleared the decks, fixed up the steering, removed the non essential ropes, had a wash and then went for supper at the hotel, making arrangements to have breakfast there at 9.00 a.m. Returning to Lady Barbara they give her a check over. They took the head off the engine and re-bedded it, as the gasket was blowing a little, and checked the petrol and oil. They had used 14 gallons of petrol on the journey downstream. They pumped the bilges dry, and generally made ready for the return journey. Also they set to work to estimate the weight of the M.T.B. — which they found to be 200 tons, Thames measurement. Here it is interesting to record that the Lady Barbara weighed only 6 tons. They retired to bed at 2.30 p.m.

Sunday 17th March. They arose at 8.00 a.m., had the usual wash then warmed up Lady Barbara's engine. A French boat was just coming into the locks at this time. They went to breakfast at the hotel and told the waitress that two things they needed were 2 boxes of matches and a pencil. She arrived back with 2 dozen boxes of matches and 2 pencils. Leaving the hotel they went to the dock masters office to pay the docking fees for Lady Barbara entering, staying 2 nights and leaving with the M.T.B. They were astonished at the price, which was 4s. 10d. They made arrangements for the time of leaving the locks — which was 11.30 a.m. They made an attempt to buy a gangway at the shipyard but were unsuccessful. They met two gentlemen coming from the French cargo boat who enquired where they could obtain food. Frank recommended the LNER Hotel. The two then asked Len and Frank to keep an eye on the gangways of their boat as the cargo was deadly poisonous and they were not supposed to leave it unguarded. After filling up with fresh water from fire hydrant at 11.30 a.m., they obtained extra crew in the shape of

lock men to assist with ropes. After much blowing of whistles, Lady Barbara finally manoeuvred the M.T.B. into the lock with the help of a tug. Len at the wheel of the M.T.B. awaited the arrival of Lady Barbara and Frank, had a final check-over in the locks then proceeded into the "sea". All the men at Immingham Locks were very helpful. The wind was blowing very strongly from the south and the tide was flowing fast. Visibility was one mile. After a while, a French cargo boat passed them on the starboard side and also a trawler, painted green and numbered 11.645. Both boats were on their way to Hull. Lady Barbara and the M.T.B. were tossed about in the waves, Lady Barbara looking like a little cork in front. They had petrol supply trouble which lasted for five minutes. Their approximate speed was three and a half miles per hour. They hoisted the York Motor Boat Club flag. The wind was getting stronger, and the visibility was getting worse.

Two miles further and half a mile from New Holland Pier, they had petrol trouble again. Losing five minutes they passed the New Holland Pier at 3.25 p.m. Not a soul was in sight except for five little girls, waving. The weather was looking bad, the wind was stronger and visibility was four miles. Two barges passed them. Off Reade's Island the tow rope came out of place, and a strong wind blew them a mile off their course, turning them round twice. They also had petrol trouble here again and drifted within 50 yards of sandbank. All this time a plane was flying overhead. It watched their progress until they set off again, making their way to Wintringham Haven, where they intended to stay the night, but an empty barge; the Quebo of Hull; was passing at the time and the master asked them if they would like a tow to Goole, which they accepted. Attaching to the barge at 5.30 p.m. and continuing on their way, the weather was slightly better, visibility 5 miles. No boat was in sight and the barge was pulling well. Len threw the broken crockery overboard. A ship called "Yewmount" of Glasgow passed on the port side at great speed.

It was now getting dark and the wind was dropping. Two large boats steamed by in the dark. Finally they arrived at Goole at 8.50 p.m., the barge holding them against the current whilst they tied up at Victoria Pier. Lady Barbara was swept by the current and was rammed amidships, leaning over so that the water came through the doors as Len said his prayers. The little tug finally righted her self. After making mooring ropes secure they examined Lady Barbara and found they had lost all the railings, and that the forty gallon drum of petrol was just holding on to the flagstaff socket. Lashing this on they decided it was time to have some food, having eaten nothing since breakfast. Meantime both boats were swinging round with the tide and they had to leave their supper to right them. They went to the Lockmasters office for information about tides, currents and bridges. He was not able to give much information about the latter; as they did not come under his jurisdiction.

Monday 18th March: both men were up early to catch the tide and just getting ready to set off from Goole when the pier master came to tell them the river was too dangerous to leave on that tide. The water was flowing at 5 ½ knots, and they decided not to travel on that tide. Later in the day they were advised by several tug masters that they would not be able to pass under any of the bridges without their being opened. Because of this, and as the Lady Barbara would be unable to hold the M.T.B. against the current, they decided to charter a tug. They then went for a meal after which they cleaned up the Lady Barbara generally, and made a plug to seal up the exhaust pipe as water was flowing up into cylinders. Then they went ashore and had tea, and decided to go to the cinema. Meanwhile the boats had to be swung

round with the tide again. The M.T.B. was a big attraction here and they had quite a few sightseers.

Tuesday, 19th March 'Stayed in bed until 11 a.m. Had a photographer to breakfast and he arranged to call again at 2.0 p.m. and also at 8.15 a.m. on Wednesday morning. Len went and made arrangements for the tug at Messrs. G. D. Holmes Ltd. and chartered the services of tug "Fremantle", which was to pick them up at 8.a.m. on Wednesday. After they had a meal they cleaned out the M.T.B. clearing out about five sacks full of waste paper, rubbish etc. They went for a walk into Goole calling at one or two shops, having some tea, going to the pictures and afterwards buying fish and chips and eating them on the way back to boat. Then it was at last to bed. At about 1.0 p.m. they were awakened by two de-mobbed soldiers who had come to purchase a small boat which was very badly damaged and was on the deck of the M.T.B. They made themselves at home and produced a bottle of beer and a discussion took place about salmon fishing. They finally left after about half an hour, having completed their purchase.

Wednesday, 20th March, they got up at 6.30 a.m., they had a good breakfast and washed, then made ready for the tug. It arrived at 8.00 a.m. Also the photographer arrived. They left Goole at 8.30 a.m. towing Lady Barbara behind the M.T.B. with Len taking the wheel of the big boat. They arrived at Goole Railway Bridge 8.45 a.m. They were 3 feet too high to pass under the bridge so it had to be opened. It was a very clear morning, and a bus full of children on their way to school stopped on the river bank to watch them pass. Soldiers in a DUKW were on the river to the starboard side. They came to a newly made Island and as it was high water were able to keep to the right hand channel. They got round the Island satisfactorily, and arrived at Boothferry Bridge at 8.50 a.m. Again they were three feet too high to pass under, but were now in sight of mouth of River Aire then on they went round Asselby Island.

Arriving at Selby Rail Bridge, they were two feet too high to pass under and as an express was passing over, it was unable to open. Having passed dangerously near to the bridge, the tug had to turn them completely round in the river. On the river banks were German S.S. Prisoners of War working. A dead sheep and lamb lay by a small sandbank. Passing Selby Shipyard, a number of the men in the shipyard were coming out and they stopped to watch them. Selby Railway Bridge was now in sight and was opening. Again they were approximately two feet too high to pass under. They arrived at Selby Road Bridge at 10.25 a.m. finding they were three feet six inches too high to pass under. Unfortunately they grazed the starboard side of the M.T.B. when passing through as the bridge was only 25 feet in width. Frank now took the wheel of the M.T.B. as another barge passed. It was the "Henry Hunt" of Hull. The weather was perfect, the visibility very good.

Cawood Ings were now in sight and an aeroplane dived down to have a look at them. They proceeded round the bend to Cawood. Cawood Bridge had to open as the draught of the M.T.B. was three feet too high for the bridge. They motored through perfectly at 11.45 a.m. and arrived at Naburn at 1.00 p.m. having had quite a bit of manoeuvring about to enter the large lock which held both the M.T.B. and Lady Barbara, the tug going into the small lock. Whilst in the lock they had quite a few visitors from a nearby flour mill. Len went to see Mr. Fewster to pay locking dues, which were "Lady Barbara and Tug 2s-2¹/₂d and M.T.B. 9s-4¹/₂d. They also received information from Mr. Fewster that the river had risen by 1ft. 6in. which did

not leave them much headroom under the bridges in York. Finally after a check for stowaways on board, they left Naburn Locks at 1.45 p.m., arriving at Naburn Railway Bridge at 2.05 p.m. There was no need for this to open as they passed under comfortably with about 4 feet to spare. Nothing exciting happened now until they arrived at "Dirty Dicks" at Bishopthorpe at 2.09 p.m., when his wife began waving her arms frantically in the air saying there was a submarine coming up the river. A gentleman out walking on Fulford Fields with a small dog took photos of the boats as they passed. There was not a soul in sight on Fulford moorings.

When they passed Fulford Barracks they heard target practice in progress. Skeldergate Bridge was now in sight, reducing speed, there was 1 ft to spare when they passed under. Passing without mishap, they called to the tug to reduce speed still more. They made their way on to Ouse Bridge at a creeping pace and managed to pass under the bridge at dead centre with 4—5 inches headroom to spare. Crowds of people were now gathering on the banks and the bridges; you can imagine the cheering as they crept on towards Lendal Bridge. This was thronged with people cheering and waving as they slowly passed under with a foot to spare. The banks between Lendal and Scarborough Bridge were packed with College Boys who were having a small rowing regatta which they unfortunately had to interrupt. They now increased speed slightly and passed under Scarborough Bridge with a foot to spare, people were still following them along the bank wondering where they were going. The tug had to take measurements of depth as they motored home. They pointed out the place they were to moor and the tug manoeuvred them in without doing any damage. At approx. 5.50 p.m. they were moored securely and the tug men handsomely rewarded before they said goodbye. Frank and Len settled down to a welcome cup of tea after an interesting and adventurous trip. Against all the odds they had brought the M.T.B. to a new home.

No more was recorded in the files about the M.T.B. or Mr Buckby and his family. We can only hope that they managed to settle down to a happy life in their unusual home.

Note: Subsequent research of serial number MTB 767 reveals that Motor Torpedo Boat 767 never existed but that Patrol boat (Torpedo) PT 767 did, and that she was American and not British. She was one of a final batch of 30 cancelled in 1945 while under construction at the Electric Boat Company (ELCO) of Bayonne New Jersey at the end of WW2. Her design (ELCO 80) was an enlarged version of a Vosper type which had been shipped earlier to the US to be copied and put into series production. PT 767, had she been completed, would have been powered by 3 aero engines and heavily armed with four torpedo tubes and an array of automatic weapons. As it is she must have crossed the Atlantic as an unfitted hull on a freighter to be sold in 1946 as a house boat.

Glyn

Canvey Island to Acaster Malbis

Dr N. J. H. Wallis was a past president who was a real stickler for getting the Club members working for the good of the Club. He was also keen to get the members involved in navigation. He himself made many voyages to different countries most of

which were on his boat Rojambo. The first recorded voyage here though was on his boat Gai Rob.

Jimmy Wallis' first recorded voyage was from Canvey Island to Acaster Malbis on a boat called Gai Rob. He set off in August 1954 with a crew of five, which included the previous owner. The weather was kind to them and they passed quickly down the Thames estuary and stood out at sea to avoid the Maplin sands. They passed the measured mile at 9.5 knots and crossed a succession of banks which ran fanwise from the Thames estuary. As darkness was descending they had reached Harwich harbour, the details of which were familiar to him from trips to the Hook of Holland by Steamer. That night they moored up against the train ferry and hastily knocked wooden pegs into empty oil drums so that they became buoyancy tanks for their dinghy. At 6.00 a.m. the next morning they set sail in choppy weather and by 4.00 p.m. they were in a cross sea of about 5ft high. They passed a lightship which was clearly labelled "Gordon" but the chart said "Reed"; so they decided to set course for the coast to be on the safe side. They ran into Gorleston and approached the harbour master for some advice on the weather and also to ask why the name of the lightship off Yarmouth had been changed. He laughed at these poor amateurs and told them that the chart-scale, lightships were not named but were classified as either "horn" or "reed". He advised them to carry on north with the night tide. At 10.30 p.m. they slipped out of the river and steered due east then north at a bearing of 132 deg. The weather held and the night sky was clear.

They passed Cromer and Sheringham and then went out to sea. By morning the wind had risen and the sea reached six to seven foot waves. They were in a gale from the S.W. Navigation was forgotten; survival seemed important for those who were not being sea-sick. A bottle of cleaner broke loose and coated the floor with a slippery slime, but a bucket of sea water dispersed it. They lost their position but a buoy on the horizon turned out to be East Dowsing, the vessel by this time was corkscrewing. The previous owner who was with them and was on the wheel had a strange idea that maximum speed was the remedy, but Jimmy took over the wheel and reduced the speed to 5 knots and turned into the wind. The motion of the boat quietened and after a couple of hours the Norfolk coast came into sight. Eventually they reached a calm pool off Hunstanton, where the rapidly dropping tide left them landlocked. When the tide rose they raised anchor and sailed across the Wash in a moderate sea and went North in the deepening dusk. Incredibly, they used the Neon signs of Billy Butlin's camp at Skegness, as their landmark. They steered N.E. and eventually began to pass shipping moored in the Humber waiting for the next tide. By 1.00 a.m. they could see ahead of them the lights of Grimsby. They scanned the North Sea Pilot to see what the lights meant; but found that every combination of lights said "You can't come in here." Breaking the rules they slipped into one of the dock approaches, narrowly escaping impalement on bomb-shattered piles, and anchored for the night.

At 6.00 a.m. they were awakened by the rising tide and were swinging in a fierce tidal slipstream. They raised the anchor and carried on passed Hull in a south-westerly gale. At 8.00 p.m. on Monday, they reached Acaster having made 425 sea miles in fifty-six and a half hours of sailing, an average of 7.5 knots, and a diesel consumption of 41 gallons. They celebrated their achievement of the voyage in the

Royal Station Hotel, York. The crew parted privately convinced they would never do it again but overtly agreeing they would look forward to the next trip.

For more than twenty years Jimmy Wallis was to spend a few weeks each summer sailing his next boat Rojambo. She was a sailboat built at Whitstable with Brixham trawler lines for the hull. She was 36ft. x 11ft. 3in with a draught of 3ft 9in. She had two 60hp Coventry diesel engines.

The Iceland Trip

In 1963 Jimmy did his first trip to Iceland. He had a crew of four young men. They set out from York in late July doing the 70 miles to Spurn Point then up the East Coast; passing Whitby and Tynemouth; and into Blyth, where they were entertained by members of the Royal Northumberland Yacht club, whose headquarters are on a former lightship. The ship continued North across the Firth of Forth to St Andrews, and then past Bell Rock along the coast to Aberdeen, and finally she reached Peterhead.

The fourth day found Rojambo at Wick with an overheated engine but they found a workshop able to make the additional interchanger needed to Wallis's design in only ten hours. This solved the problem and they continued north to the Orkneys, where amongst the fog they found Kirkwall, the capital.

They continued in deep fog to the Shetlands navigating by radio. On the eighth day they reached Lerwick. After a compass check, they left in the evening for the Faroes.

On the tenth day they reached the Faroes where they went shopping and saw they could buy such edibles as whale meat, and were able to radio home.

They set out the next evening, accompanied by a flotilla of small boats, through a gap in the islands south of Red Thorshaven, the capital. Their final bearing from the radio in the fog was the most Westerly point, Myggenaes. By 04.00 hours on the twelfth day they were well on their way across the 248 sea miles to Iceland, but they realised the calculations were wrong and they were running into a gale. It seemed that the waves rose as high as their masts. Most of the sail was taken in, and the engine speed was reduced, but the ship was slow to respond to the helm. One of the helmsmen used so much force that he snapped one of the steering cables and Wallis had to go below to the engine room to effect a repair. He managed to insert a three foot length of nylon rope, and for the next few hours Rojambo battled on until a huge wave struck. The ship's radio was torn from its fastenings and broke when it hit the deck.

Four days later the storm finally abated and the sun shone. By use of a sextant; Wallis took a sight of the sun and worked out their position as the north-east of Iceland. A second shot showed them to be in the south-west. Finally, they found they were in the Denmark Strait between Iceland and Greenland. After five hours, the highest peak in Iceland; Jokul; came into view. They had a marvellous reception in Iceland and a Japanese radio was sent to them by plane in order that they could navigate their way back to York. They made the 2,642 sea miles in three weeks and four days by the time they returned to base. Wallis said that throughout the journey his young crew had never faltered under any of the terrible conditions. Also that 7,000 sea miles later the rope repair was still holding!

This was on of many wide-ranging voyages made by Dr. Wallis, including trips to Malta, Yugoslavia, East coast of Italy, Tunis, Sardinia and Corsica, South of France, Spain and Gibraltar.

The Shenzi Incident

One of the worst aspects of boating is the danger of a boat catching fire. This happened to us on our previous boat, a Turbo 36ft Moonraker, called Shenzi.

On 1st September 1998, Glyn and I and our friend Robin Woodruffe were faced with a near disastrous and potentially fatal incident while at sea. What follows is a description of events before, during and after.

The YMYC was invited to attend the Glanford Motor Boat Club Regatta from the 29th to the 31st August. Nine boats, including Shenzi left York on 28th August. We tied up at Glanford in Lincolnshire at about 2100. The next morning we moved onto a pontoon near the centre of the club and prepared ourselves for the coming events. On the 30th August we took part in some of the events at the regatta and our club managed to win two events, one was a rowing competition for which Glyn won a cup. We then spent a pleasant evening in their clubhouse meeting the Glanford members. The next morning we prepared to leave for Ferriby Sluice, the plan being to cruise in company with Keith Lavender's boat Chaldur to Whitby via Grimsby, Scarborough and Robin Hood's Bay. We were cruising down the river Ancholme at tick-over when the Port engine cut out. This was due to sludge contamination of the fuel and was shortly followed by the same failure on the starboard engine.

We called Keith on the VHF who turned round and took us in tow alongside Chaldur. Soon after this Chaldur developed a weed trap blockage, and it was decided that we should return to Glanford, so we limped back to a vacant pontoon.

En route back to Glanford, Glyn had been draining off the sludge he had found in the fuel system. When we moored up at Glanford we were approached by a member of the Glanford committee named Colin. He very kindly went to his place of work and brought us a small pump with which a substantial quantity of thick brown gunge followed by water was drawn off the bottom of the tank. During this period I was able to page our friend Robin Woodruffe, who intended to join us at Ferriby Sluice. His father drove him to Glanford and that completed our crew. Having three people on board was to become essential later on. When the fuel tank had been stripped of gunge and water, fuel filters changed, engines bled and run up on test, we began to enjoy the rest of the day. We collected the silver cups the club had won at the prize giving ceremony and joined in the Commodores rally. After that we turned into Glanford town on the old side of the island. Robin and I went to find a bank and buy some stores. When we returned we found that Glyn had, predictably enough, found a pub with a mooring, tied up to a boat named Liability and was drinking beer with the Ferriby Sluice lock keeper and the owner of Liability.

The following morning it was pouring with rain, but dressed in our waterproofs we were not deterred from a shopping opportunity, by dinghy. After this final fix of retail therapy, we returned to Shenzi and set off down the weed-bound river Ancholme in improving weather. The other York boats were waiting for a level at the sluice when we arrived. Within a few minutes we were all through the sluice. Shenzi and Chaldur headed downstream for Grimsby and the rest of the York boats headed upstream for York.

After we were clear of the sluice, Glyn cleaned the weed traps, stopping one engine at a time. Chaldur set the pace and we increased revs to match it. I felt cold with the increase of speed and went below to the cockpit leaving Rob and Glyn on the

flybridge. A few moments later I saw smoke rising into the cockpit from the port engine cover and dashed up the steps; meeting Rob on his way down. Glyn and Rob had both smelt the fire from the flybridge and Rob had come down to investigate. Rob returned to the flybridge to tell Glyn who in turn, came down, stopped the port engine and fans, pulled the fire extinguisher only to be driven out of the cockpit by the smoke and fumes which had erupted. Once outside, Glyn shut off the gas bottles stowed in a ventilated locker on the flybridge. In less than a minute, normality had transformed into a major fire emergency with only two options, fight the fire from outside the superstructure or abandon ship. I took over on the flybridge and called Chaldur on the VHF, Rob and Glyn, while keeping the wind to their backs, fought the fire by throwing buckets of water onto the port engine cover via the port cockpit window. The plastic bucket, distorted by the heat lost it's handle and I radioed Keith to manoeuvre close enough to pass his bucket by boat hook to Rob. Running on our starboard engine I followed Chaldur which was now diverted for Hull Marina.

After some time and many buckets of water, the fire was doused sufficiently for Rob and Glyn to enter the cockpit. A check was made to ensure that all internal doors were shut and the port engine cover was lifted to find the seat of the fire. Flames were clearly visible round the turbo charger. These were finally extinguished by spreading a large towel; soaked in water; over the turbocharger and surrounding area. The towel was doused repeatedly with buckets of water, and the lid replaced between each bucketful. A glance over the stern confirmed that the bilge pump was working well, so we had a major fire to contend with but at least we were not sinking.

With the first fire extinguished, Glyn took over the flybridge to enter Hull Marina. I had been at the wheel and operating the VHF to keep Chaldur informed of events for an hour and a half in pouring rain. In the lock we thought we were safe, there was a sudden backdraft of smoke fumes and flame in the cockpit from a second fire. This came from the wiring loom behind a panel above the site of the first fire. As fortune would have it, the inner lock gates were opening and Glyn drove at speed trailing smoke and flames round the marina to the guest pontoon where there was a hose point. During this final and desperate sprint we were pursued along the quay side by an idiot telling us to turn off our engine. Were we meant to put sails up and sail in?

Arriving at the guest (visitors?) pontoon, I shouted to a woman who called the fire brigade on her mobile phone. Glyn started to fight the fire using the jetty hose. It had spread up the port side of the cockpit and had taken hold in the deck head lining directly beneath the gas bottle stowage on the flybridge. The driver of a passing gully sucker had seen our fire and backed up his appliance to the quayside. Rob dashed along the pontoon, grabbed the drivers hose and ran it down to the boat. With both hoses going the second fire was rapidly brought under control. There were two bad moments when a supposed Hull Marina employee told the gully sucker driver to shut off his hose only to be ignored, and then he shut of Glyn's hose behind his back while the fire was still raging in the cockpit headlining. Why do such people always manage to crawl out of the woodwork at times like that?!

In spite of everything the only things for the fire brigade to do when they arrived was to dampen down and; using their breathing apparatus under Glyn's instruction from outside; to stop the starboard engine, which had kept going all the way without missing a beat. Glyn then went to the marina office to phone home. Very shortly after, a representative from our insurers arrived for an initial survey. After he left; our two sons Ryan and Jason came to take us home, or if you want to put it another

way, to bail us out! Aboard Shenzi the next day, a meeting was convened to determine the cause of our fires. What had happened was that a spray of lube oil had saturated the turbo charger lagging and the aft interior of the port engine bay. Even at the reduced running speed at the time of the outbreak, there had to be sufficient heat from the turbo charger to act as the source of ignition. The starboard engine was tested and everyone agreed that we should return to York on one engine, which we did and got safely back. Our thanks went to all who helped us, but we never did get to meet the man with the gully sucker.

As I write this in 2004, time has moved on and so have we. Shenzi was sold last year and has now gone to a lake in Northern Ireland. With hindsight, perhaps we should have given up on her and let her burn. It cost us more than the insurance paid up to put her to rights; and we lost a lot of boating time while she was being repaired. Faced with losing a boat, something unexplainable inside you makes you continue to fight. It must be added that Glyn's job in command at sea had given him some experience in fire fighting on ships. We were also in a good position to keep going because we had three people on board. The third person can take the wheel during a crisis. It also can be a benefit if you sail in company with another boat, we were grateful to have Chaldur and her crew with us. Shenzi comes back to haunt us every now and then after the fire she appeared in the background of a popular episode of A Touch of Frost, and they have shown that episode a few times over the years since it was made.

CHAPTER 15

The future of the Club

Our membership tends to fluctuate. In the Sixties we had a very large membership because there was an increase in the leisure time that people had and less things to spend money on in the way of hobbies. Also there were more moorings to be had at the club because the boats were so much smaller. Now there are more people having to find moorings up and down the river. Our club has had an onslaught of troubled waters throughout its past; but we have managed to steer through them. We try to provide the right facilities and atmosphere for all the members, but it has always been a juggling match to try and keep everyone happy. I hope that most of the time our members have fun on the rivers, the high seas and in our clubhouse, for years to come.

The history of the club has evolved for over seventy years. There is still we hope much more progress to be made and much history still to be written. We have a wonderful and colourful past and look forward to an equally wonderful future.