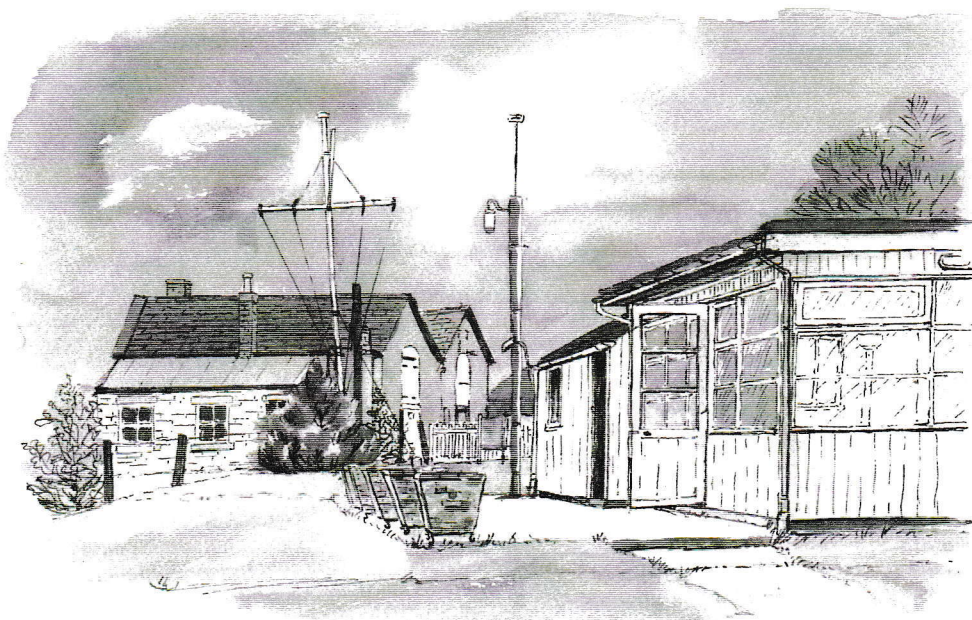


Nantwich & Border Counties Yacht Club Ltd



A. HINSHLIPPE

A Brief History 1953-2003

NANTWICH & BORDER COUNTIES YACHT CLUB LTD

THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS

1953 – 2003

PROLOGUE

The 30th October, 1953, is an auspicious date in the annals of the Club in that upon that date the Club was inaugurated at a Meeting held at the Crown Hotel in Nantwich.

In this 50th year it is felt that a brief history of the Club should be recorded for the benefit of existing and new Members. It is likely that all will find something of interest in this record. Attempts have been made to carry out this exercise, essentially in "The Dorfold" magazine and this offering is based mainly upon such material with additions from elsewhere and from individuals. Much of the history had been provided by Mr. Joseph Boughey, a past Member and son of a past long-standing Secretary and Commodore with the same name. Mrs Joan Boughey is still a Member. We extend grateful thanks to Mr. Boughey.

1939 – 1952

It is not recorded when Nantwich Basin was first used for the mooring of pleasure craft but there were two boats there in May, 1939, when one of the Club's founder Members, Mr. Raymond Slack, began to moor his newly built boat, 'Felicity'. The basin was at that time known as "Acton Basin" and presented a very different appearance from today. The mooring area stretched only as far as the cottage by the second gate. The cottage was occupied by a canal employee. The land was heavily overgrown and there was a corrugated iron shed which served as an office and from which the workers were paid. The buildings on the Club side of the basin were occupied by 'Hollands' as a cheese warehouse. The firm later moved to Calveley and now in new ownership has moved elsewhere. The warehouse had been served by canal boats but road transport proved more economic. In any event, when L.T.C. Rolt visited with 'Cressy' in 1939 and attempted to turn into the basin he was met by an impenetrable mud bar. This event is recorded in his book, 'Narrow Boat'. At a later visit in 1946 he reported that the bar had been dredged.

By 1946, 'Felicity' and two other boats on the site had been on the bank for the war years. For the next six years there were still only three boats moored at Nantwich. The land was even more overgrown and there were no gates or fences. 'Felicity' was badly rotted and was replaced by a steel (or perhaps iron) hulled boat built before 1910 – probably the 'Glen Rosa'. Mooring fees were paid individually to the Docks and Inland Waterways Executive which controlled the canals after Nationalisation.

The first Boat Club to be formed on the canals was at Haskayne, near Liverpool in 1932. There were advantages to be gained by forming Clubs rather than remaining individual moorers. It became possible to rent sites and to deal collectively with the DIWE. It opened up the prospects for clearing the sites, erecting fences, laying car parks and for organising social events. As demand grew it became possible for the control and allocation of moorings to be taken from the DIWE to the individual Clubs.

After 50 years it is not possible to be precise about all matters of the Club, particularly as there do not appear to be any Minutes of Meetings from the early

days. It is hoped that the information herein is correct and if not it would be greatly appreciated if anyone with more accurate detail will let the Club know.

1953 – 1958

The owner of the fourth boat to be moored at Nantwich is thought to have been Mr.Cyril Bickley and he is credited with being the catalyst for the idea of forming a Club at Nantwich. His boat was 'Idalia' which was launched at Salcombe, Devon with many local friends watching. It must then have cruised around the South–West coast to the Bristol Channel to enter the canal system.

Mr.Bickley organised a Meeting at the Crown Hotel on 30th October 1953 at which it was resolved to form a Club with 22 Members of whom by now six owned boats moored at Nantwich – others either did not own boats or were moored elsewhere. A Committee was elected and Officers appointed – including Mr.W.Thistlethwaite as Treasurer, a post he occupied until the late 1970's – never having owned a boat.

What to call the Club? Suggestions included 'Nantwich Cruising Club' and 'Nantwich Boat Club' but the Commodore (Mr.Bickley) proposed the present name which was adopted. The word 'yacht' includes a vessel propelled by motive power and used for pleasure cruising, travel, etc.,it does not need to have sails. 'Border Counties' are those of Cheshire, Shropshire and Staffordshire.

Again, Mr.Bickley drew the designs for the Burgee featuring the areas of green and white to represent England and Wales, the plume of feathers for Cheshire, the leopard for Shropshire and the knot for Staffordshire.

By the end of 1953 there were five boats on the moorings, the latest being Mr.J.L.Weatherby's 'Romany'. Two of the others belonged to Mr.Slack, 'Glen Rosa' and Mr.S.V.Offley, 'Eileen'. Members such as Messrs Slack and Offley carried out many cruises aimed at securing the continued existence of the canals nation wide for the benefit of pleasure cruising. They both played a significant part in the activities of the then recently formed Inland Waterways Association and all boaters owe them and their like a deep debt of gratitude for their hard work. Mr. Slack changed 'Glen Rosa' for a Taylor boat from Chester called 'Teal' in 1954

In 1954 a Sailing Section was formed which had a Lease at the Lake at Doddington, near Nantwich and this joint enterprise continued until 1969, when following waning activities it severed its close links with the 'Yacht' Club. The Sailing Club still exists and is flourishing. Its Burgee is basically similar to that of the 'Yacht' Club.

1959 – 1965

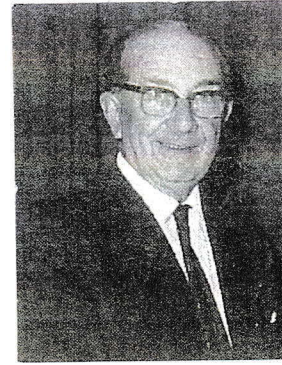
In 1959, Messrs. Slack and Offley designed two complementary boats to be built by Taylors of Chester, in gleaming mahogany. They were to be called 'Marbeth II' (after an earlier boat which had been too wide for the canals) and 'Teal'. These boats were to have centre cockpits whilst one had a bow and the other a stern cockpit, by which means it was possible for easy conversation whilst moored or in locks. Mr.Weatherby bought the old 'Teal' and renamed it 'Quiet Waters' – this he replaced with another Taylor boat in 1962 which he also called 'Quiet Waters'. The first 'Teal' was sold to Mr.G.Thorley in the Club and renamed 'Amaryllis'.

In 1960 the Club considered a wholesale removal to the Prees Arm of the Llangollen Canal but British Waterways, reluctant to encourage investment along the still insecure canal, offered further linear moorings at Nantwich on the main line

TWO FOUNDER MEMBERS



Raymond Slack



Stanley V Offley, M.B.E., J.P.



"GLEN ROSA"



"EILEEN"

The earliest known photograph of the embryo Club in 1954



"?" "Eileen" "Teal" "Roma" -?



"Glen Rosa" passing the Saluting Base at the Macclesfield Rally in 1953

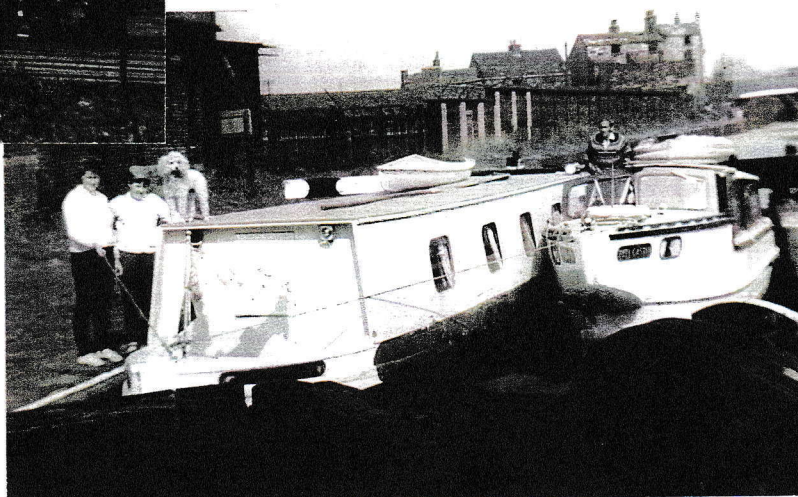


NANTWICH Basin in the 1960's



Moira & Bob Edgley converting
"Ambition" in 1964

"Ambition" & "Peel Castle" -
owned by Joe Boughey in 1966
at Blackburn Locks



towards Acton. These were taken up and before long a small workshop had been erected and a water tap and car parking space.

About 1960 a second section of the Club was formed on the Llangollen canal in a small arm alongside the A5. About five boats were moored here but when the land was wanted for development about 1965 it was lost. It now forms part of the site of the 'Little Chef' with moorings nearby. Some of the moorers came to Nantwich moorings.

Another extension followed in 1964 with access to narrow linear moorings along the main line, ending 'under the trees'. on the original site a larger clubhouse was erected in 1965, forming the hub of the Club's activities and events such as the Regatta. Whilst originally a nautical event this developed over the years into a weekend of games and competitions.

During the 1950's and 1960's Club campaign cruises were regular events. These included through Ellesmere Port to the Manchester Ship Canal to the River Weaver and Weston Marshes Lock. Also to Middlewich and the Macclesfield Canal. Friendly links were set with the Lymm Cruising Club, also deeply involved in retaining the canal network.

With the advent of more extended moorings many more boaters were able to join the Club and moor and whereas the late 1950's boats had been mainly of the Taylor style and large wooden boats from 'Dobsons' of Shardlow, such as 'Seafire' (Cayzer—Evans), 'Copellia' (Mrs.R.Davis) and 'Timothy John II' (Already so—named before bought by the Barnes family), other varied makes and sizes appeared. 'Peel Castle' (J.P.J. Boughey) 'Solan'(R.W.Edgley) and 'Yana' (E.Corley). The last named was one of the early glass reinforced fibre boats to arrive.'Yana' was specially adapted by Mr.Corley for wheelchair access for his physically handicapped wife, Freda.

Other new arrivals included marine—ply self—built boats from kits, e.g. 'Palmer' (A.R.Jones), 'Naiad' (H.A.Cashin) and 'Maureen' (A.W. Cookson)— the oldest boat in the Club today. R.W.Edgley bought a heavy wooden hulled boat which he called 'Ambition' and this, with some heart-searching on the part of the Council, he was allowed to fit out on the moorings. His later boat 'Moira E' was probably the first steel hulled narrow boat at the Club.

The practice of craning the boats out of the water in the winter and back again in the spring, allowing maintenance and safety from ice, was started very early on and at one time as many as 33 boats regularly stood on the bank throughout the winter. With the advent of steel hulled boats and the reduction in the number of wooden and GRP, as few as 16 have been craned out recently which has made a major impact upon the costs arising from crane hire. Pressure washing commenced in 1983 with great benefit but the small number of boats being lifted by the 2000's has made this too expensive.

1966 –1974

Membership in 1968 was about 120, owning about 64 boats, not all of which were moored at the Club. In that year it was felt that an occasional newsletter should be started. Three issues were made in that first year with names suggested as 'The Aqueduct', 'Propeller', 'Basin End' and 'Acton News'. Mr.E.Howson was elected Editor and at the AGM in 1970 he was elected 'Honorary Editor' with a seat on the Council. The present name 'The Dorfold' was adopted during the building of the

new basin. Consistently, there have been three or four issues each year. There was a short time when it appeared to be sinking but happily it was saved. It has had about eleven Editors and has held a high standard. One Issue won a 2nd Award in an AWCC review of similar magazines.

Security of tenure at the premises was necessary for the Club's future and British Waterways had decided that such tenures should be under strict Lease Conditions. At the same time they decided that they did not wish to Contract other than with Limited Liability Bodies. So it was that the first Lease started in 1973 for a period of 14 years. It was not until 1975, after protracted negotiations, it was finally signed.

On 27th March, 1973, the Club was incorporated as a Limited Liability Company (by Guarantee) and this dovetailed with the new Lease which included the new basin which BWB was constructing to be completed in 1974. The basin was built on land purchased from the Dorfold Estate, hence the 'Dorfold'. The basin was piled with steel sheets as was the length of main line adjoining the new basin and a concrete apron was floated behind the piles. In later years the apron was removed when it was found that frost was damaging the piles.

At the same time, better tie-bars were fitted across the full width of the peninsula between the basin and the main line to prevent collapse. A land drain was sunk along the border between the basin and the farm field, running to a chamber at the north end near the basin entrance. Fencing was erected and, at the request of Dorfold Estates, a leylandii hedge planted. This the Members accomplished and it is clear to see the success of this effort. Pruning since has proved to be a big problem. Wooden stagings were installed in the basin and in a very short time these were filled with boats from the influx of new Members in 1974. Mooring in the basin was restricted to wooden and GRP boats which enable some boats from the main line to move in, thus making more room outside for more steel hulled boats.

The Dorfold Basin was opened officially by Mrs. Weatherby on 'Quiet Waters' from the front of a convoy of mainly Taylor boats, when she cut the ribbon across the entrance. A 'Celebration' was held and well attended at which thanks were given to BW and to the men who did the work. Specially baked bread and beer were provided and a large cheese presented to the BW workmen. Mr. Brian Haskins, BW Area Engineer thanked the Club for its gestures.

It is coincidental to mention that at the time of the original canal construction it was intended that it should traverse Dorfold Estates land but the then owners refused to permit it. Instead it became necessary to build the embankment and aqueduct around the estate at considerable cost and hazard, still requiring regular maintenance.

As mentioned earlier, the Club attained its Limited Liability status in March 1973 and it was at this time that the Memorandum and Articles of Association were published, after much work by the Council. These govern the activities of the Club and the Articles set out the nature of the Membership, its Officers and Council, the form of Meetings, finance, Annual General Meetings and the general behaviour of all its Members. The Founder Patron (C.L. Bickley) and President had died in 1972.. Most of the other Officers were elected to the new Council and a number of new posts specified and filled.

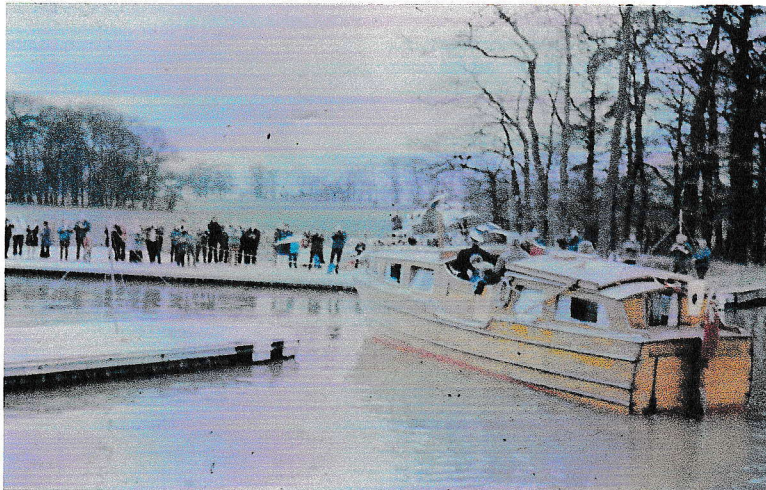
The Commodore was J.L. Weatherby, Vice-Commodore — E.R. Slack, Rear-Commodore — L.A. Moon, Secretary — J.P.J. Boughey and the Harbourmaster —



'Dorfold Basin' nearing completion -
1973



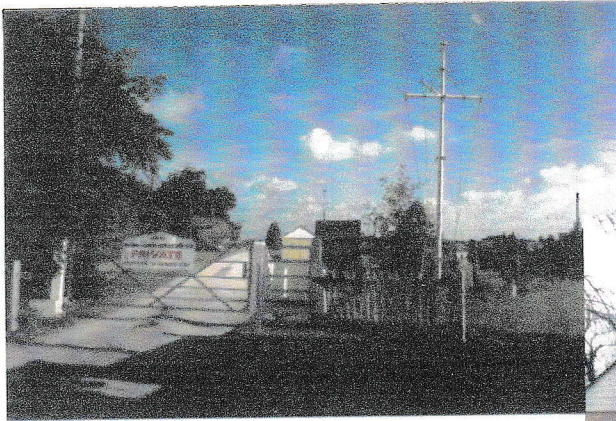
Commodore, JL Weatherby on
'Quiet Waters' with.....



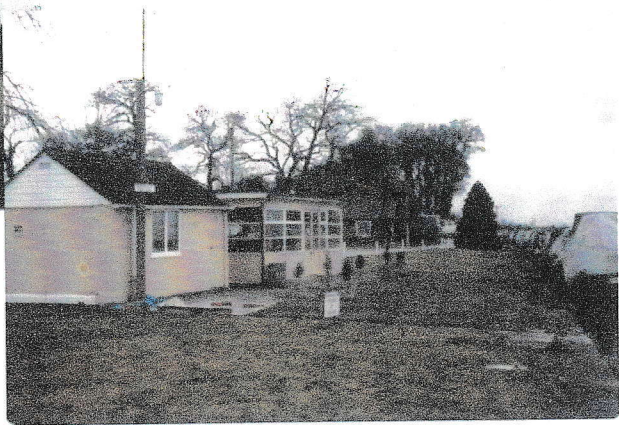
.....Mrs Weatherby who cut the
tape to open the 'Dorfold Basin'
in 1974. Note the 'Taylor' boats
and not a steel boat in sight.



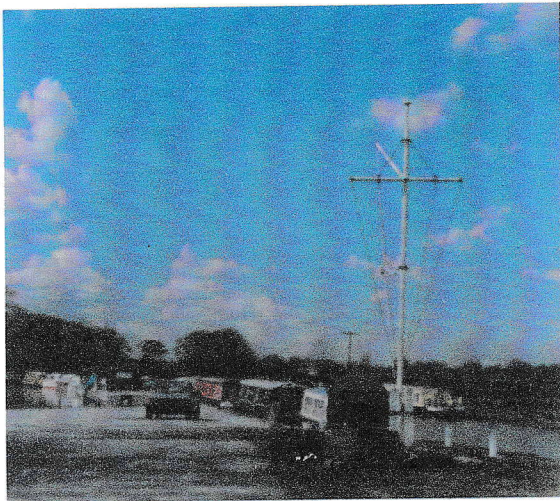
Repiling 'Dorfold Basin' and installing
new stagings, circa 1998



Club Entrance and Flagpole 1960s - 1990s



Clubhouse and Kitchen 1960s-1990s



New site for Flagpole



1960s Club Cruise through Anderton Boat Lift. Mainly 'Taylor' built boats



Two Harbourmasters
H. Brooksbank ('Denise')
L. Wright ('My Fair Lady')



Club boats in Weston Lock (M.S.C) in 1965

H.Brooksbank. Many of these gentlemen had served the original Club for many years and, having all passed away, earn our gratitude.

It is not possible to list all the Members who have served the Club in various capacities with great diligence over the years but thanks are due to them all.

1975 – 1985

In 1975 it was agreed, unanimously, to honour Mr. Raymond Slack with the Presidency of the Club, regretfully, he died shortly afterwards. In his Memory, his wife, Mrs. Ena Slack, presented a Challenge Trophy to be known as the 'Raymond Slack Trophy' to be awarded to the Club Member who travelled the greatest distance over 14 consecutive days, plus one weekend, with the Captain aboard, and kept a 'Log', fully authenticated, of the cruise. Other Trophies have been donated over the years, these are:— President's Cup — Mrs. Weatherby, Bishop Cup — Mr. Mrs. J. W. Bishop, Juno Cup — Mr. & Mrs. N. F. Oldfield, Decorated Boats — Cine Film — Mr. L. A. Moon, Slides, Photographic. — Mr. W. Barnes.

During this period the Taylor boat, 'Amaryllis' having had four owners within the Club was sold by Mr. G. Thorley to the Boat Museum at Ellesmere Port where it is now on permanent display, occasionally venturing out onto the canal system.

In 1977, it was agreed to offer to Mr. John Weatherby the Presidency of the Club, which he accepted. At the same time it was decided to limit the time a Member could serve as an Officer of the Club to three years in order to give other Members the chance to serve. For continuity it was decided in 1989 that the three year limit be removed from the Offices of Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer. Over the years other alterations have been made to the Articles to reflect changing circumstances and conditions, methods of fixing and paying fees, winter storage provisions, junior Membership, etc.

In 1978, 'Marbeth II' left the moorings when Mr. Offley gave up boating.

1986 – 2000

The BW Lease to the Club is one which requires the Club to keep the premises in good repair at its own expense and this work falls to be done by the Members under the direction of the Rear-Commodore for the time being. This is a continuous task and much work has been done over the years, particularly at Working Parties. When work is necessary beyond the ability of the Members it may be necessary to employ Contractors. In 1987 the basin and linear moorings were dredged by BW at a cost to the Club of about £3,000. In 1988 the tops of the basin stagings had become dangerous and were replaced by Contractors in a metal form at a cost of about £7,000. In 1991 and 1992 it was decided that the canal banks on the two remaining lengths of the main line moorings should be sheet piled and this was done by BW at a Club cost of about £20,000 in total.

The first BW Lease expired at the end of December, 1986 and renewal negotiations were begun. Considerable work was incurred by a Sub Committee of the Council over a long period but, because BW were planning developments at Basin End which entailed the loss to the Club of the original Basin End site, progress was not achieved until September, 1997. The new Lease, at very considerably increased rental was signed and now expires on 31st December, 2016. That Lease was for the main part of the site but a separate Lease for one year was signed, again at greatly increased cost, for what had come to be known as the 'green piece'. The offer of a further year for that part was rejected by the Club on cost grounds and the area

vacated. This meant that a few of the newer Members had to be asked, with very great reluctance, to leave the moorings

Having achieved the new Lease, it was decided that the piling of the Dorfold on the long side was in very poor condition and, after obtaining competitive quotations, a Contract was let for its repair, together with the replacement of the stagings by steel, at a total cost of about £30,000.

During the Lease negotiations, the Club obtained an Option on about 100 metres along the northern stretch of the linear moorings. Development of this section is not envisaged in the foreseeable future.

The Club celebrated its fortieth anniversary in October, 1993 and a social event was held at the Crown Hotel, Nantwich, the venue of its foundation Meeting. Regrettably, Mr. John Weatherby had died not long before but Mr. Stanley Offley, then aged 94 joined the gathering. As a memento of the occasion, a plate, suitably decorated, was produced and presented to each Member.

OVER THE YEARS

Since the campaigning cruises of the early Members there had been many Club cruises over greater and smaller distances. Some which stand out are along the Manchester Ship Canal to various places such as, the River Weaver, Cheshire Ring through the Anderton Lift before closure, Worcester, Gloucester & Sharpness canal, Leeds & Liverpool returning via the River Trent, the Black Country Museum, and many more. One unusual cruise was that organised by Mr. Malcolm Fletton on hire boats on the French Canal du Nivernais.

Upon retirement from the IWA Council in about 1967, Messrs Offley and Slack presented the 'Offley—Slack Propeller' to the IWA to be awarded to the Club with the largest number of its craft cruising to the IWA National Rally. The first award was made in 1969 and the recipients were N.B.C.Y.C. with 13 boats. Not repeated since.

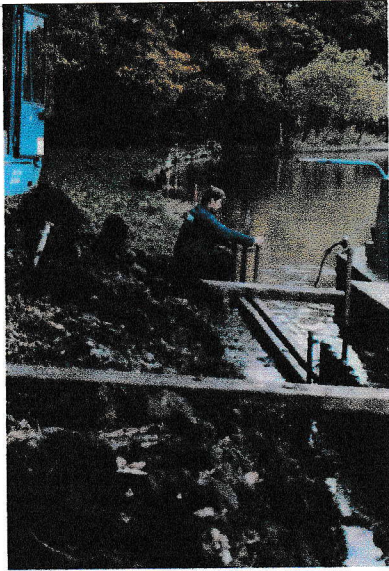
Many of the Club Members have been very active on the IWA front — too many to list here. However, Mr. Richard Drake held their post of National Chairman for a recent period of four years.

There have been many changes on the site, a new Clubhouse was given by a Member and this was clad in tongue and groove and now provides accommodation for meetings including a kitchen. The flag pole has been moved opposite the Clubhouse and stands prominently by the canal narrow. A timber signing—in hut has been placed facing the canal near to the Clubhouse and two other timber sheds provided as workshops and stores. The grass is cut and weeded throughout the season and the whole site kept clean and tidy. Complimentary remarks are to be heard from passing boaters and walkers.

Water pipes are installed at frequent and accessible intervals and electricity is in course of being fitted within reach of most boats.

Some steel hulled boats are now moored within the Dorfold and new Members with GRP boats have been recruited to fill the vacant stagings to maintain numbers and income.

The Basin End buildings are now leased by BW to a commercial canal concern, fitting out steel hulls built elsewhere, as a chandlery, dry dock, boat and engine repair shop, launderette and cafe. A fleet of time—share boats is serviced by them and mooring of many other boats in the basin falls within their activities. A boat



B.W. piling the main line in 1991



Club members carry out maintenance work. Stone laying and weed killing



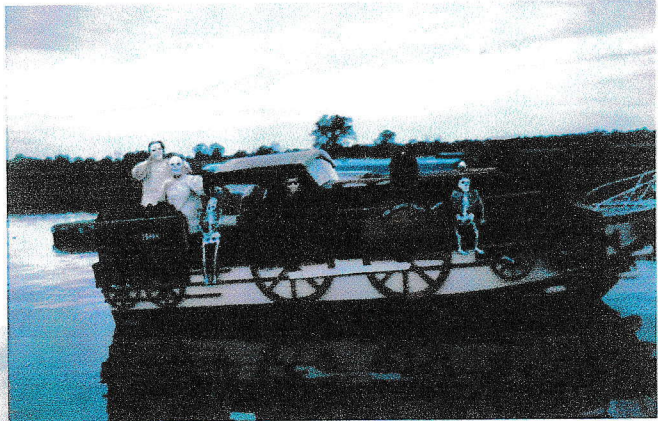
A fancy dress competition held in a marquee on 'The Green'

The wedding reception for Christine Boughey and Tim Barnes in 1981, held in a marquee on 'The Green'



Decorated boats at a regatta.....

'The Ghost train'



Believed to be 'James Bond and his Girls'

Charity cruise for Nantwich handicapped residents



A social gathering on the Worcester cruise 2000

Part of the gathering at a Tilstone Barbeque



sales brokerage takes up part of the basin jointly owned by the above concern and another. At some time in the future BW hopes that they will be able to develop the area, in conjunction with private partnership to accommodate leisure activities wholly or partly with a canal and boating theme.

Recently it has been felt that with the rapid growth in popularity of the canals and the increase in the number of boats, frequent long cruises by a large number of Club boats might prove anti social and such cruises have been curtailed. However, short runs to Christleton, Tilstone and Wrenbury to pub venues or barbeques at appropriate times are thought to be acceptable, with one long cruise, annually.

The Club has supported many and varied charities and through events such as Regattas, 'Bring-a-Friend Picnics', etc useful sums have been donated to R.N.L.I., Montgomery Canal Trust, Anderton Lift Trust, River Derwent Appeal and to other Boating/Children's funds..

Many social events have been held at the Club premises and elsewhere in the District. The Annual Dinner Dance is held at various hotel locations, as far afield as Blackpool. Marquees of all sizes and shapes have been used and music has added to the atmosphere. One notable occasion was the Wedding of the son and daughter of two of the Member families, Christine Boughey and Tim Barnes reception was held in a marquee and Members invited. The couple was seen off at the end of the day on the stern deck of a narrow boat. Many happy hours have been passed around competitions for Boat Handling, Time Trials, Treasure Hunts, Illuminated and Decorated Boats.

2003 - THE GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY YEAR

This paper has skated over the first fifty years of the Club, much detail is missing and it would be very satisfying should more information come to light in the near future. It has been a little like carrying out Family History Research – instead of asking parents and grandparents for their stories, we leave it too late and valuable material is lost for ever. The Club has very many wonderful Members, many of whom were characters in the full sense of the word and whilst it would be impossible to record their names and their doings, our memories of them live on. The same must be said of those Members who have given generously of their time and effort to ensure the success which the Club has enjoyed for 50 years.

At the last count there were 195 Members and 65 Boats

The Anniversary will be celebrated at the Club on 28th June, 2003 with a social gathering. None of the Founder Members will be able to join us but a hearty vote of thanks must be accorded them. It is hoped that the function will be well attended.

EPILOGUE

Through the dedication of many Members over the past 50 years, the Club has grown and prospered. It has set a standard much admired by others and with the full support of current and new Members the reputation can be sustained. The Club needs Members who will give to its wellbeing for the benefit of all.