

The memories of Pauline & Dave Rowe

Old photos show that the club site was originally a grass covered verge and when the club first started members would come alongside a grass covered quay.

The old clubhouse site was cleared of derelict buildings and the wooden clubhouse was obtained from Reeves Timber Yard. This served us really well until it's demolition to make way for the lovely building the club now occupies.

We joined the TBA in 1981 when Mal Bradshaw was Commodore. We were made very welcome by him and also had the advantage that David's uncle Fred Ware was a member of the club and for a long time, also being the Wines Secretary. Sadly Fred is no longer with us but Val is still enjoying her retirement in Tenerife where they had moved to.

Joining the Social Committee was a great way of getting to know other members and the ways of the club. We would recommend this to all new members, even if you think you haven't time to attend the monthly meeting but would like to be involved in some way, just let the Social Secretary know that you are willing to help with events or running a draw or perhaps help at one of the Sunday Snax days.

Back in the time when we joined one of the events was the twice yearly Jumble Sale. Nobody really relished helping with this, sorting clothes, books and white elephant, but it was fun and it was popular. We put flyers around the town advertising the sale and we always had a queue at the door waiting for opening time – then it was like Harrods Sale for about half an hour before becoming a bit calmer and the customers and ourselves were able to enjoy a cup of tea and cake from the galley served by Dorothy Adams and her trusty band of helpers. Although there was a collective moan from the committee whenever it was time for the next Jumble we were all agreed it was worth doing as it brought in money for the social fund.

Not everything we did raised money. The Club held BBQs on Sharpham Quay throughout the summer but the quay was falling into disrepair. We were never charged by Sharpham Estate for the use of the quay and so felt this was something we could help with in return. On a lovely summers day in the late eighties a large group assembled and during that day and the following couple of weekends we rebuilt the front of the quay. We had to work at great speed to find stones and cement them into place before the tide came back in. The men did the back breaking work and the women searched in the mud for smaller suitable stones and provided food for the workers. It was very muddy, hot, hard work and there were plenty of sore hands and aching backs but the end result was well worth it.

The annual club regatta was held on Blackness beach and took place over 2 days. Events included blindfold dinghy racing, wellie throwing, tug of war, flora and fauna competitions and many more. On one or two occasions adverse weather conditions meant a retreat to Sharpham to hold the regatta there.

In June we held the Summer Fare and were generally blessed with good weather to display our stalls and games outside the club house. We learnt to time it right to catch customers alighting from the River Link cruises and it was a good money raising event for the club.

A well supported winter activity was 'Sids Treasure Hunt' organised by Sid and Mary Mortimore. Members left the clubhouse in their cars to dash around the local

countryside following the clues set by Sid and Mary. Cream teas were laid on at the clubhouse where the results were announced and prizes given out.

The first Sunday in October used to be the Dart Raft Race. A great fun day and the club ran a BBQ on site during the day and members had a prime spot to watch the rafts as they approached the finish line. In the final couple of years the club entered a team for the event but then as with a lot of things 'red tape' closed it down.

Apart from the social side of the club there have been great changes in the way the boating side is run. Not so very many years ago all the boats were taken in and out of the water each season by Tony Lewis with his Landrover and trailer. He and his team of helpers would carry out this operation over 4 or 5 weekends each spring and autumn. Now of course the whole thing is done over 2 days with the large crane hired twice a year.

In the early eighties we obtained permission from DHNA to lay additional moorings on the mainstream between the two bridges. These were laid by the club members with the help of Len Salisbury and the DHNA barge.



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