

B.S.C. 1939-1989



A History
of the
Blakeney Sailing Club
Golden Jubilee



... For those interested a meeting will be held at Quay House at 8.30 p.m. April 10th 1939 to discuss the Blakeney One Design Class and formation of a Club ...

'In the beginning' ...

by Philip Page, Founder Member

Blakeney Sailing Club is 50 years old, but its roots go back many years before 1939. Annual Regattas have been held since 1863, apart from the War years, but in the early days most of the boats were ships' boats.

By early 1900's many local families, and a few annual visitors, had sailing boats of their own, but these were usually sailed by professionals – mostly fishermen – who were employed by a family in a similar way to a gardener or groom.

By 1910 or thereabouts, members of some of the regular visitors – families who bought houses in Blakeney and spent their holidays here – decided to form their own club and the Blakeney Amateur Sailing Club was founded by the Evans, Cookes, Agnews, Scotts, Murdochs and others. Only the Cookes remain and a member of the fourth generation, Arthur, paddles his own canoe now.) The Amateur Sailing Club consisted only of its own Committee and never had any ordinary members; its only function was to put on three races on succeeding days each August for Seniors and Juniors – (these terms referred to Boat Lengths and not the ages of helmsmen!) Handicaps were fixed by the committee on a personal basis. Hardly any two boats were the same before classes came into being in the Thirties. It was widely believed by most participants that the handicaps favoured the committee members! The course was extended to go round the Regatta Course twice in effect i.e. 4,3,1,4,3,1,4 Simms posts. Flying starts were never used.

By the mid-Thirties class boats were beginning to arrive in some numbers, but they tended to be racing machines such as International 14's and National 12's, which couldn't be used as family boats and parked on the Point for the day. There began a need for a local class of simple but tough and not too expensive family sized boats with a modern rig and capable of being looked after by amateur owners. A small committee was formed in 1938 to choose a design and produce rules restricting deviations from the design to ensure that the boats were a true one-design. A prototype was built by Kenneth Newton at Cley during the winter of 1938/9 and sailing trials were held in March 1939. AS a result of these, several minor modifications were made to the fittings and rigging. The design was based on the 18' Uffa Ace, with the length reduced to 16'. Whether Uffa ever knew his design was mucked about with no one can say, but it is doubtful if he would have been very pleased!

The boat pleased the small committee however, and on April 10th 1939 a Public Meeting was held in the Quay House, Blakeney, which proposed the formation of The Blakeney Sailing Club. At a later meeting on 27th May 1939, Rules were adopted and Officers and Committee were officially appointed. The main objectives of the Club were "to organise racing for sailing boats in Blakeney Harbour" and "to establish the Blakeney Harbour One-Design class of boats"



"Fatty" Long who skippered the FLITTERMOUSE and the CURLEW for J.W.Allen was every Blakeney youngster's friend.

So that's how it all started.

Some Reminiscences

Jocelyn Heaney, Secretary 1953 -1971

During my 18years stint as secretary in the 50's and 60's a great many changes took place. In the early 50's races were push-off with a few flying starts, starting between the Cooke posts. This could be very exciting! However, eventually a small crab boat called Bridget Anne, 'B.A.' was bought. A mast was fitted, so races could be started anywhere opposite a handy pole or buoy. This was a great improvement, but not very comfortable for the starting crew. We had a permanent started at this time, but unfortunately he was rather too fond of the bottle. Using a shotgun, although with blanks, could prove a little dangerous!

Eventually an ex-army pontoon was bought and anchored out in the harbour, with a small cabin amidships, it was a very comfortable committee boat. A variety of courses could be sailed.

All committee meetings were held in the upper room at the Kings Arms. The landlord, Gus Holt, let us have it for a nominal rent. The room used to be packed for the A.G.M. (far more people than today!) As today, there was always a discussion on acquiring a Club House, but the only thing we succeeded in getting was the hut on the Carnser.

John Case and I attended the first meeting of the N. W. Norfolk Sailing Association. Graham Beakley, secretary of the Ouse Amateur Sailing Club invited representatives from all the clubs along the coast between Lynn and Blakeney to a meeting, initially to co-ordinate our regattas, but it very soon developed into a week's racing for National 12's, other classes being added later.

One N. W. Norfolk day at Blakeney is still known as Black Tuesday. Nationals, Fireflies and Enterprises were racing. Shortly after the first boats had rounded the pit buoy, a terrific gale blew up within minutes, anyone who hadn't managed to get their main down was in the water! A few finished under the jib, but most of us had to be towed into Morston by various motor boats. The Temples did a great job collecting lost gear at low tide.

Peter Catling bought one of the first Nationals to the Club before the war and was faithful to the class for the rest of his life. He was one of our most successful helmsmen and must have his name on every cup for which he was eligible.

Peter was commodore for several years and did a tremendous job to improve the racing.

The Regatta was run by its own committee and was sailed over four days. Two days push off as now and two days scratch racing, one day for class races and one for muck boat, ranging from 12' and under up to 18' and over.

Very few people had road trailers in the early days and one of the great sights was to see all the Sharpies from Brancaster and Wells sailing round the evening before the regatta.

Before the days of Portsmouth Handicaps the committee used to set the handicaps and these had to be worked out the O.O.D.'s (not always correctly!)

Two ladies used to visit me regularly to complain about their respective handicaps. One year two new boats arrive in the harbour, sixteen feet over all,

but with overhanging bows. One of the ladies approached me, saying that those couldn't sail with the 16's because they were more than 16 ft overall. Having looked up the R.Y.A. rules, I found she was right and told her if we stuck to the rules, she would have to remove her bowsprit!

The handbook was introduced during my stint, previously only a fixture was issued.

The 50's, 60's, & 70's

D.W. Reid, Commodore 1968-1971

When asked to give an account of the progress of the Club during the 50's, 60's and 70's it seemed a very easy assignment. My immediate memory was of quite rapid growth from 74 members in 1951 to around 500 in 1970. The makeup of the Club as I recalled it started from a comparatively few local families, or those with holiday homes in the area, who tended to stay as a family from late July through August. In fact it looked as if there was a steady growth and a steady increase in activity. But memory is deceptive, it is only when looking at the records kept by officials of the Club in those days that it is clear that the pattern of development was complicated, though certain patterns do emerge.

Two lines of development became clear, expansion of old ideas, the Blakeney amateur club system being made more democratic, flexible and workable but aimed at providing sailing for those on holidays who wanted fun. At the same time, there was an increasing demand for class racing for those who wanted to improve the standard of sailing. All the time the search for the Class boat that would suit everybody, occupied the thoughts of the Committee, and those sailing, no matter how we tried, we never found the answer and, I fear, we never will. It is relevant to the argument that after 50 years the renascent B.O.D. fleet now equals the much vaunted Phantom fleet at times!

Let's look at how the racing was conducted in those mid years, how the numbers and types of craft changed, bearing in mind that in 1950 petrol was still rationed and supplies of timber were limited. It was not until the mid 50's that, with these restrictions gone, the tremendous expansion in small boat building occurred. In 1950 you could buy a National 12 for £92, a Merlin Rocket for £120 or a 2 h.p. outboard motor, for which you might be able to scrounge petrol, for £25.

The sailing programme was limited, in the main, to meet with the Trent Sailing Clubs at Whitsun, otherwise most of the racing was to handicap on the Regatta course, in late July and August. There was a National 12 Cup and a Firefly Cup.

By 1954 the new pattern was emerging. At Whitsun 9 boats sailed the Regatta course, in June a Team Race was won by Blakeney Sailing Club, sailed in Nationals and Fireflies against Horning Sailing Club. The Catling Cup for National 12s in the August North West Norfolk Sailing Association meeting, had 10 entries, there were four Fireflies, but for the Regatta there were 237 entries over four days and 69 boats started for the Gray Cup. By 1960, for the Whitsun meeting, 28 Nationals and 10 Fireflies, in August, 30 Nationals, 26 Fireflies, 28 Enterprises and there were 40 Regatta entries. More classes were added at Whitsun and the North West Norfolk. Typically, in 1968 30 Fireballs started in the North West Norfolk sailing meeting and 67 boats in the Regatta. These were

peak figures for the high season in good weather but study of the records does make today's entries look a little 'slim'. Club races in the 50's seemed to attract about 15-20 entries the 16's and 14's, hotly pursued by 'Jane' figuring largely in the Prize lists, but, around 1960, the new Class boats, such as Enterprises and Wayfarers came on the scene and the Starter called an entry of 28 for an evening's race "a disappointing turn out on a lovely day." Yet the following year he did complain of the Club's ever-present problem when he said of the 25 boats entered for a cup race, "a well filled race with every sort of boat except coracles and Noah's Ark", (I assume Jim Crawley and the family did not get up early enough that day!) He had a point, there were 14 different Class boats and three varieties of pleasure boats in this fleet. In spite of all these problems the pattern of racing did emerge over these years. The season started with the open meeting at Whitsun, now the Spring Bank Holiday, Club handicaps through June and July with the major open races, Hospital, R.N.L.I., Ryder Smith etc., in July/August, and the Regattas soon as the moon decreed. The Amateur Cups and Morston Regatta followed in late August/early September. In fact the Committee in the 60's had to recognise that in fact it was a holiday Club and its first priority had to be to give maximum value for money to its 300 holiday members. If serious racing could be sneaked in, then fine. Peter Catling, N. Foster and the Worths established a tradition of confidence and control of the Open meetings which at times saw up to 90 boats on the water. That was to stand us all in good stead over the years.

There was some excellent sailing and we learned a lot, there were moments of farce, at times near panic but, in general, the Club established a reputation, maintained ever since, of running races that were entertaining as well as being strictly by the book.

The day the Line Squall hit the North West Norfolk Sailing Association meeting will live in the memories of most present on that day. There were capsized boats in all directions; some ended up in the Morston Creek, to their intense surprise; others in the funniest places on the marsh. But to mis-quote Stanley Holloway, "Nobody drowned, no-one was hurt and there was plenty to laff at after all"

The day that Roger Gresham-Cooke, sometime B.A.S.C. stalwart, much respected Commodore of the B.S.C. and a Conservative M.P. won the Daily Mirror obstacle race designed to introduce the masses to the joy of the sport was a moment to treasure! Author as race officer, took a long time to live down his stranding two thirds of the fleet at a major open meeting, on a beautiful summer evening, on the mud, on the ebb, even Sam Breeze had to abandon the rescue boat and walk home that night! In mitigation, it must be said, that subsequent Beer and Bangers party at the Manor Barn was one of the best ever. Summing it all up, the Club grew, we changed our ways and had to become a deal more professional but, as always, a lot of people gave a lot of their time and care and it's fair to say, that we all had a great deal of fun.



It's not all hard graft when controlling a race from the 'ROGER COOKE

SOCIAL EVENTS

by Basil Dickinson, Commodore 1983 – 1085

The opening of the new Village Hall in Blakeney brought about a dramatic change in the social events of Blakeney Sailing Club.

Previously the Club had had to seek venues at various hotels in the district. The big problem here was that no-one wanted a Club social even at Bank Holiday and some popular weekends. It was also difficult to find a room big enough to accommodate all those wishing to take part.

Another serious drawback was cost – even in the early 80's it was necessary to charge £8-£10. On occasions it was necessary to hire such places as Langham and Wiveton Village Halls and call in outside caterers. Due to lack of facilities these were not successful events.

The Laying-up Supper of 1983 was the first event in the Village Hall – 96 members attended and enjoyed a fine meal prepared by Jean Widdup. A band played for dancing and, at a cost of £4.50 per ticket, a profit of £88.46 accrued to the Club.

Thereafter all Rigging-out and Laying-up Suppers were held at the Hall and the Club were most fortunate in obtaining the services of Jean Widdup, Wendy Faulkner and latterly Bill Blackiston to undertake the catering. All events have been notable for the ambition and the quality of food produced on site.

The one problem that arose during these events could be put down to the “generation gap”. It appears that modern bands or groups cannot perform without amplification which causes a sharp division between the pro and anti factions. At one time the appearance of the band led to the prompt departure of 60%, leaving 40% to endure or enjoy the rest of the evening. In consequence it was decided to hold a Supper without a Band, starting and proceeding at a more leisurely pace. This was a well received departure and resulted in only a slight drop in numbers, but an almost total absence of Junior members.

Mid-Season events have taken place with a “shepherds pie” type lunch, a bar and films or a Speaker. These have been well attended, but then what a good excuse to meet old friends again in the middle of the close Season.

The 1988 Laying-up Supper was well attended, a superb meal enjoyed and a very successful evening had for just £5 a head.

Ten events in all have been held at the Village Hall, all of them enjoyable and the Club funds have benefitted from every event.

What of the future of the Club's Social life?

The retiring Vice-Commodore felt that the time had come for a change of face and some new ideas. No matter how successful a formula has been it can become stale if a fresh impetus isn't given from time to time. Many schemes have been mooted in the past, i.e. Discos, Barbeques, Dances, etc., during the Season. Remembering that entertainment has to be provided for the Brancaster match, Seafly Open, Gresham match, Lifeboat crew, etc., it will be seen that this is sufficient for the Vice-Commodore to cope with.

Any ideas and offers of practical help will no doubt be welcomed by the Vice-Commodore.

The social life of the Club is of greatest importance in view of the diminishing numbers of racing members. Without the benefit of a Club House, the social events are vital in preserving the spirit which keeps the Club together.

GEORGE LONG

A history of Blakeney Sailing would not be complete without some attempt to paint a small pen portrait of at least one of the famous Blakeney boatmen of the 1930's. Tough independent characters usually blessed with a wry and sometimes mischievous sense of humour (think of Fatty Long). Let us look with grateful thanks, to Tony Wright's recollections, at a certain George Long, often called Wongy.

George was born in Blakeney and in his teens emigrated to New Zealand where, after working at a variety of jobs, he joined the New Zealand Forces at the outbreak of World War 1, serving at Gallipoli. Later he returned to Blakeney and worked as a boatman, mussel fisherman, wildfowler (he was a legend with a punt gun) and landlord of the Anchor Pub.

Here are some of his experiences and saying:-

At Gallipoli George's company made an attack on a certain fortified town. According to George "bullets came so thick and fast they made our eyes water!" Eventually, on looking round, he found he was the only one of his company left standing. Said George "I didn't think I'd try to take the objective by myself so I lay down in the sand and scuffed and wriggled about a bit, just like an old butt" Anyone who has paddled around in Blakeney channel at low tide knows exactly what he meant.

Tim Birkin (one of Bentley boys) invited the Blakeney fishermen to see him race at Brooklands. The following morning on looking out of his hotel window George said "You couldn't see the place for houses".

George, referring to the small amount of sail carried by a boat in a hard blow ... "She carried as much sail as a harlot's apron".

George, on being asked the reason for so much foam on the water... "a mother whale has been bathing her baby."

George, on being asked his opinion on a very weak cup of tea... "You can see the bottom in five fathoms."

George, telling Tony how much tide time he had to make the point that day ... "You can go home and have a comfortable breakfast."

George, referring to a certain individual ... "He's as narrow minded as a snake's arse."

George, after moving to a new house with a magnificent view... "I can see the Dogger Bank and the partridges take the pegs off the linen line."

George, on hearing Mr. Chase had been killed in a train accident in Spain.... "A good man gone."

George, getting older, was watching a tennis match on T.V., when a slow action replay caused him to remark ... "They must be getting tired."

Like his contemporaries, George has also gone but is not forgotten.

M.J.P



DREDGING

The B.S.C has co-operated fully with the relevant sub-committee of the Blakeney Parish Council and the National Trust in supplying data on tide performances and channel measurements. Last October we completed our 6th survey of the cut and 2nd survey of the sum at the mouth of the cut which we have christened – “Cooke’s Hole”.

FUN EVENTS AND JUNIOR SAILING

BY Morris Pye

Even from the early days of the Club it was soon apparent that an occasional diversion into a light-hearted type of sailing was not a bad think. Especially if it encouraged the younger helmspeople.

One of the earliest attempts was the Wallop Cup which started by Gus of the Kings Arms calling time at the appropriate moment, resulting in a mad dash down to the Carnser and a frantic rigging and push off into the darkness.

Trophies for younger generation sailing events were presented by various benefactors and there were odd competitions sometimes to the point and back with very alternative means of locomotion – one competitor even rode along the beach from Cley on Horseback.

Another idea was to return the pre-war pattern of “Intensive August” with the result that one December evening in 1976 a bunch of young ‘uns and old ‘uns met in Cyril Butler’s manor house at Cley and the Mid Week Holiday Sailing Club Subcommittee had been born. Initially it was designed for the younger generation but such was the interest that a senior class was later included. Every year since 1977 there has been an additional programme of about 12 events on August weekdays sometimes operating under such varies titles as :-

Sailing Tests; The Blakeney Harbour Navigational Competition
Maxi Starts and Mini Races; The Great Agar Creek Expedition,
The Mill Run; Bank Start Races, and of course Flying Start Races.

Our best year so far was 1983 when we had 128 starters (average 11.7) and for one N.T. Races last year we saw 20 competitors start from the Sims Posts and follow the Sunken Pilot’s path.

Every year we run a senior and junior points competition but the chief satisfaction about the whole series is to watch the improving standards of helming by the younger generation. There have been some superb sailors who sadly (for us) go out into the world and are lost to Blakeney.

Never mind the likes of Alistair Warren and Simon Low are notably filling the gaps left by Simon Lennane, Roger John Wood, Nick Loasby, Matin Tully, Hazel and Sally Oxenford, Richard Edwards, Neil Foster, Kirsty, Mike Allwood, the L-J’s and the suffering handicapped “Ibex”, Rupert Sutton, and the Murphy and Matthew’s families (the latter often with 3 boats, God bless ‘em) and many others.

Maybe one day they’ll return to race at Blakeney – it’s been done before!



“Mill Race – August Series

LOW POWER MOTOR BOAT RACE

By Morris Arthur

Motor boat racing was reintroduced in 1988 after a lapse of 40 years. The aim was to have fun and do something invaluable. In recent years levels of expertise and light strong materials have increased the speed and cost of boat racing. It is by no means certain that participants are having more fun and even less certain that innovation and variety have a place so far as the competitor is concerned. Colourful sails and equipment have not produced colourful competitors. The 'fever pitch' excitement of the annual regatta has been diluted by regular 'round the buoys' dinghy races. A weekly infusion of small amounts of adrenaline taken every day with every 'round the buoys' dinghy race renders the yachtsman insensitive to the otherwise exciting of an annual event. How exciting could a birthday be if we had one every week?

A forty year span is too long, an annual event seems to be about right.

The Motor Boat Race in 1988 was planned to coincide with the R.N.L.I. Lifeboat visit. A cup and 3 R.N.L.I. Pennants were provided for winners. The boats were to be low powered dinghies or crab boats and similar types. 'Similar types' to be interpreted by the Race Control Officer.

A week of intensive pre-race publicity was launched at a well-know tavern situated within reach of the highest water mark. The crab boat mafia spread the word and a disguised agent from Morston ensured it would be by no means exclusive etc. B.S.C. affair, allcomers would be welcome.

On the day a score of boats turned up, each paid a £1 entry fee (for the R.N.L.I.) and as the spring tide threatened to drown the Race Start Committee, excitement reached fever pitch. Torn between expediency, dignity and two of the younger competitors eager to begin, the Committee accidentally started the race. Such a start has all the characteristics of an avalanche. The carefully calculated handicap system was hastily substituted by the starting order based on the Race Officer's extreme skill and prejudice.

Attractive young maidens as crew were said to be worth thirty seconds reduction of handicap. Crusty old salts in crab boats were skillfully concealed by their more decorative companions. Irresistible appeals were made to their manhood. "Darling, what is that funny noise I can hear?" As the old salt bent over the engine box, thereby presenting a more acceptable part of his personality the 'crewene' used her best vamping techniques to advance the handicap of her vessel.

Suddenly a miniscule pebble of a boat shot off from the bank. A 2 h.p. engine drove a 5 foot long shell into the tide. The loan boater had placed his feet close to the bow of each side of his small craft. His left hand was on the starboard corner of the transom and his right hand was free to steer or bail according to the demands of his vessel. Steering his course by looking between his legs he tore off at about 3.5 knots.

The rest of the fleet followed at timed intervals, each boat bigger and supposedly faster than its predecessor.

Finally the avalanche proper. All the 'crab boats' types aligned behind the start boat as it led them in growling procession to their flying start at the mouth of the cut. Just beyond the 'Bridge Sands' the fleet showed signs of surging through the

flying start line in disarray. Fortunately at that moment the Sherringham Lifeboat arrived to be met by a fanfare of crab boats horns and a return to good order. Swiftly the cut appeared and the crack of a maroon signaled the 'off'. Engines were opened up to a full roar. The start boat peeled away and the crab fleet rushed by in a frenzy of frothing wakes. Fantastic!



Line up for the first motor boat race for 40 years.

The race provided crews with a challenge to their skills. A strong cross tide and wind drove them towards Cley on the first leg. Motor handling and boarding methods were tested along with initiative at the Watch House. Here a less than perfect race briefing caused a little confusion for some. Others brushed aside petty details and set off for the point throwing up showers of spray as they met wind and tide. The return to Blakeney was very fast and the handicaps sufficient to create quite a melee as boats raced to the finish.

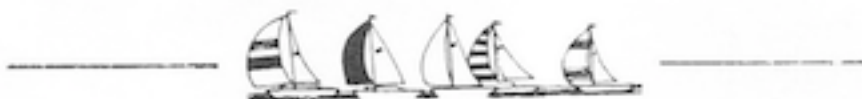
Three boats crossed the line to stop having burnt or spilled all their fuel.

Prizes were given to:-

1. Louise Temple and Sam Curtis for the first home and overall winners. A 4 h.p. flat bottomed 8ft long.
2. Babe and Doc Dunnet as elapsed time winners. 'Boy John' type crab boat.
3. Tony Faulkner was most intrepid competitor -chosen by popular acclaim- 2h.p. 5ft long x 3ft x very little G.R.P. shell.

All agreed that the race was to be a regular event.

In 1989 a post race barbeque is planned a la Olsen.



ALL TIDAL INFORMATION

Indicated by the B.S.C. is based on yardsticks which are uniquely Blakeney Sailing Club. High water time is the prediction for the actual clock time of high water in the vicinity of the 'Roger Cooke'.

Depth of water at high water is the depth of water (in feet) above normal L.W. level in Blakeney Quay. This figure varies from 1 (neaps) to 10 (springs)

“Seek And Ye Shall Find” –

“All Good Things Come To He Who Waits”

Wise old sayings maybe, but not in context of Blakeney Sailing Club and its search for a Clubhouse.

This saga begins in August 1982 with election of a new Commodore. It is said that everyone has at least one good idea in a lifetime, and this man's vision was to build a second storey on the North Norfolk District Council's toilet block under the slope of Mariner's Hill.

The scheme would have provided the Club with a Clubroom, with facilities for meetings, changing rooms, with showers, a tea bar and a rendezvous for non-sailing members of families during racing. An Architect member of the Club kindly produced sketches to prove the feasibility of the proposals and. Incidentally to enhance the exterior appearance of this 'architectural gem'.

An extraordinary General Meeting of the Club was called and enthusiastically endorsed the proposal. The likelihood of grants was explored and one member pledged £15,00 anonymously.

North Norfolk District Council were approached, as owners and planning authority, and the Officers concerned gave their backing, subject to the proper channels being gone through.

The Commodore and Committee were by now excited by the prospect of this long felt need being fulfilled. But, 'don't count your chickens before your eggs are hatched.'

Out of courtesy the committee informed the Blakeney Parish Council of their proposals before submitting a formal planning application. The Parish Council turned the proposal down by a vote of 8-0 with two abstentions, the chief objections being the development of a sensitive area and the increase of pedestrian traffic crossing the busy road leading to Back Lane.

The subject was placed on the Agenda at the Parish General Meeting in April 1984. Heavy canvassing by the Committee ensured an enormous turn out of members entitled to vote at such a meeting. However, the situation was appreciated by the Chairman of the meeting who ruled that as definitive plans were not available, no vote could be taken.

Later in the year, North Norfolk District Council rejected the application and so the first chapter of the saga closes.

In retrospect this still seems the best solution to the problem, but the opposition from the Parish Council and adjacent residents persuaded the Committee to look elsewhere.

Following the publicity over the first proposal, a fantastic offer was made in that the Club was offered a lease on the North Barn at the west end of the Quay.

Hopes were raised that a superb Clubroom with every facility could be made, and leaving part of the premises for letting to provide a certain income.

A Sub-Committee was formed to negotiate the lease and one of the members was a Chartered Surveyor with many years experience in this field. Negotiations were protracted to say the least. It was never possible to pin the lessor down to a figure and after several months he decided he wanted to sell.

Once again it was impossible to talk figures until at last he mentioned £100,000. This was in 1985, before our current inflation in property prices, and was clearly beyond the Club's means. Our Chartered Surveyor said that he had never met so evasive a customer in over 30 years in the profession.

Offers came in thick and fast and all were perused but with the same result. A private house owner offered the north end of his house over looking the Quay, but this offer was subsequently withdrawn. The old 'Hungry Horse' building at the White Horse was offered and then withdrawn for subsequent conversion to a fish and chip shop. A ground floor flat in the new Guildhall Flats was considered but rejected as being not suitable and as being unlikely to receive consent for change of use.

There was a suggestion that the Community Centre might be available but the pursuit of this suggestion merely resulted in the Commodore receiving a 'flea in his ear.'

An approach to the landlord of the King's Arms to see if the old Clubroom could be hired again, but this had by now become part of his business premises.

The next venue to be explored was 'Bugle' Baines old cottage in the King's Arms yard. Far from ideal, not only for its proximity to the King's Arms, it was looked upon as a last resort. With an asking price of £25,000, and requiring a great deal of structural repair as well as conversion an offer of £22,000 was made. Someone came along with a better offer and once again the club was out of luck.

Various approaches were made to the National Trust for a site on the Friary Hills caravan site and, whilst never rejected out of hand, there was always a delay whilst future policy was formulated. The current policy would appear to preclude that offer.

During the public debate over the original scheme, the owner of one of the fresh water marshes made an offer of a piece of the marshes as a site for a building. More recent pursuit of this avenue revealed the all too familiar cul-de-sac.

WHERE DOES THE CLUB GO FROM HERE?

Everyone says the opportunity was missed years ago when property values were much lower. But these things are relative to income as much for Clubs as for individuals.

Blakeney never could support a Club along the lines of Hunstanton or even Brancaster Staithe, a more modest facility such as that at Wells would seem best for us.

The bigger social events can happily be accommodated at the Village Hall, so that we come back to the need for somewhere to change, shower and make a cup of

tea. Sounds simple doesn't it, but as the events of the '80s prove, it is far from that.

Many suggestions have been made, some tongue-in-cheek, some bizarre, some outrageous, but surely it cannot be beyond the wit of man to fulfill such a basic need.

Any serious suggestions to the Commodore please.



BRIAN BLOGG SAID:-

David and I won the Seafly National at Worthing. The boat no. 290 was one of the first composite Seaflys built by a Devon boatbuilder. It was certainly an amazing few years for Blakeney Sailing Club, when you consider it was at the peak of National Sailing events. I doubt if there are many classes who can raise over 40 boats now. Brian Cooper and Morris Arthur set a very high standard, which with modern rig and reaching spinnakers, Cooper's patience and clever understanding of how to tune a boat to top speed and Morris's brilliant driving, Blakeney Sailing Club became something of a legend all along the South coast and it still rubs off today with Erik carrying the flag for Blakeney.