



Under the Flag

*A History of the Early Years of
Lichfield Cruising Club*

*By
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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LICHFIELD CRUISING CLUB

THE TWENTY YEAR LEAD UP TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LCC

Part 1: Under the flag of the CCS (NB)

1959

To many people in the local boating fraternity, the roots of the Lichfield Cruising Club could be regarded as reaching back to the period prior to the first Rally of the CCS (NB) held at Huddlesford on the 19-20th September 1959. CCS (NB) were the initial letters of the Coventry Canal Society (Northern Branch) which was the name of the organisation before being changed to the Tamworth Cruising Club.

Half a dozen or so boat owners from Fradley Junction, all members of the CCS (NB), were getting discontented with their moorings on the ground opposite to the Swan car park, this being due to interference with their privacy by the ever increasing numbers of towpath walkers, caravaners and other footloose wanderers attracted to the area by the Swan.

This small band of boaters were in the habit of cruising to the Plough at Huddlesford on most weekends and thus met and became friendly with Mr McMullen, the local British Transport Waterways lengthman who lived with his family in part of the cottage which was later to become our Clubhouse.

1960

After 12 months and a fair few pints in the Plough, Mr McMullen was persuaded to keep his eye on our boats in the event of us moving onto the Wyrley and Essington canal adjacent to his cottage garden. We finally agreed to move in, while at the afore-mentioned rally. The manoeuvre, however, did not take place until just over a year later beginning on the weekend of the 19th November 1960, when four boats belonging to myself (Alan Perry) in my first boat "Phoenix", the four Squires in their jointly owned boat "Wanderlust", Arthur Penn in his boat "Needwood", and Ray 'Lofty' Penn in "Calypso", all tying up in the canal entrance and gauging hole. At the time the entrance to the arm was nearly silted up solid and the arm itself completely choked with weeds. We were gradually joined by other boats until by the end of the year the "Fleet" had grown to seven or eight craft. Naturally in this part of the history of the moorings, several "firsts" were recorded - the first piece of maintenance equipment came our way on New Years Eve in the shape of an ex-Army pontoon acquired from the lock-keeper at Tame Valley canal bottom lock, no questions asked. The pontoon soon to be named "Son of Fred" was to be our future work boat, the "second first" being our first boat "break-ins", only kids stuff, nothing stolen but everything turned upside down.

Another first was a trip up the arm to the bottom lock of the Wyrley and Essington, that is Ogle lock No 30 which is situated approximately 400 yards up-stream from Cappers Lane. The venture terminated inside the entrance to the lock and was achieved by punting and paddling the work pontoon through masses of rushes, overhanging bushes and various other types of vegetation.

1961

Mid February, 1961, saw the arrival of Doug and Molly Holt in their boat "Cavalier". They were just in time to be involved in the first serious attempts at de-weeding the canal using our pontoon work boat. This entailed hauling vast quantities of blanket weed, etc, from the canal bed into the boat and then dumping it onto the bank to dry out when the summer arrived.

Simultaneously, hedge cutting operations began, hacking the 15ft or so high bushes back to clear the

boats. The upper branches being out of reach had to be left overhanging the boats thus creating a tunnel effect along the cleared towpath.

All of this work was done by hand, power tools being a thing of the distant future.

At the end of March 1961, the arm was inspected by British Transport Waterways officials together with the elders of the Club with a view to leasing 800 ft of the canal for the exclusive use for mooring CCS (NB) boats. Amongst the BTW party was Tony Grantham who had already been involved with the Club since its conception and was proving to be a great pillar of strength both physically and advisedly. He was later to become the President of the Club. Both parties ended the mornings work in the Plough, everyone sure of a happy conclusion to the visit. The BTW Club Secretary, Harold Trussler, offered £10. The final deal was settled at the princely sum of £15 per annum, the 800 ft not becoming official for many a day.

By the late summer, the Huddlesford Fleet had grown to about eight or ten permanent boats, plus half a dozen from Tamworth who had visited for short periods only. Amongst the Tamworth visitors were Derek Walter and Ron Wem, both putting in plenty of work in establishing the mooring. The boats came in all shapes and sizes ranging from cruisers constructed from ex-Army bridge pontoons, a ships lifeboat, an airborne lifeboat, half narrowboats and even a couple of very splendid propriety built cruisers.

Until now, the boat owners had provided their own landing stages, most of them being only a small platform adjacent to the boat cockpit, crudely supported on a framework hammered into the canal bed. This arrangement looked very picturesque, especially with abundant clumps of bulrushes growing among the various constructions but this DIY system was shortly to go.

At the end of September, one of the Club's benefactors, Frank Burgess, donated enough timber to make a single plank staging 12" wide by 3" thick stretching for the whole length of the moorings as was being used in this first year. It was supported on timber framing suitably driven into the towpath and bed of the canal. This new staging did much to improve the appearance of the mooring.

Arnold Cox, a future Club Treasurer and Trustee arrived on the mooring at about this time in his boat "Pippin".

More casual weeding, hand dredging, towpath clearing and hedge trimming went on throughout the year, the individual boat owners doing a bit now and again as the mood took them.

The car park of the day left a lot to be desired by 1990 standards. Members simply left their vehicles on the strip of ground between the road and canal near to the Plough bridge. The usual boating gear then either had to be humped along the towpath, over the footbridge and along our moorings, or first walk to the boats and bring them to the cars to load up. This procedure was the same when taking deliveries of material for boat construction and work parties etc. The cars were left quite safely on this spot even when parked for a couple of weeks at holiday times. This was of course before the population explosion of Lichfield and Whittington.

It is interesting to remember how most of the household deliveries to the Club cottages were left at the Plough bridge from where the McMullen family and their next door neighbours, the Miss Cappers, had to collect them in wheelbarrows. These items included coal, furniture and all other similar heavy items. To the Miss Cappers, this was no great hardship as they were well used to this way of life, having been born and bred at Huddlesford, their father being the canal tolkeeper in the busy days of commercial carrying.

Another shortcoming of the early days at Huddlesford was the lack of fresh water supply for the use of

the boaters. For the first couple of years or so boaters using the moorings had to scrounge water from the lengthmans family who kindly filled our portable containers from their kitchen sink tap. When the BTW supply was installed under the cross-over bridge things were a little easier for everyone in spite of the very poor rate of flow of water which was vulgarly known as the Huddlesford piddle. The actual flow rate was a maximum of two gallons per four minutes, or two minutes per gallon.

In between the development of the mooring and work parties, the boaters managed to get some cruising in. The first three or four boats in the area took to combining forces and making a regular annual, late summer cruise to Tixall Wide. These trips had been going on since 1955. The crews took bottles of beer, cocoa and sausages etc and cooked and consumed on and around an open camp fire. These weekends became very popular and before long the few boats had been joined by others, leading eventually into our regular Club Tixall Rallies of the future.

Two or three other trips are worth mentioning because amongst other things they helped to put the name of our Club, CCS (NB) on the map.

A couple of our boats tripped at weekends to the Macclesfield canal to join two or three dozen boats on a protest cruise organised by the Inland Waterways Association on the Lower Peak Forest and Ashton canals ending in a Rally at Dukenfield, near Manchester. The purpose of the cruise was to attempt to foil the governments plans to close these canals to navigation. The attempt was successful, resulting after many years of campaigning and work parties in the restoration of what is now known as the Cheshire Ring, which many boats now enjoy.

The main annual holiday saw five or six Club boats attending the IWA Rally at Aylesbury, campaigning against the closure of the branch connecting Aylesbury to the Grand Union canal. This was another successful achievement for the IWA.

On November 12th 1961, a trip through Dudley Tunnel was organised for the Club members mainly by Fred and Alan Squire and myself. This was an independent exercise by SSC (NB) to protest against the closure of the tunnel, all adding strength to the IWS and Dudley Canal Trust to keep the canal open. About 40 club members and friends were taken through the tunnel in a 70ft coal boat which we had borrowed, cleaned out and installed bench seats etc, paraffin lamps being used for illumination. The motive power was almost legalising the BTW canoe permit which we were using for the trip.

At about this time the railway overlooking our moorings had begun to take on a different image in the shape of newly erected cable and supporting gantries for the forthcoming conversion from steam to electric trains.

1961 came to a close with the usual Club Christmas party held at our headquarters at Kettlebrook.

1962

By New Years Eve the weather had closed in and the canals had a covering of ice 4½" thick with 7 or 8 inches of snow on the top for good measure. This put paid to any ideas about a New Years Day cruise which we had been planning.

The wintry ending to 1961 continued into early 1962 with the ice getting to be 6" thick. This caused a fair amount of concern about the fate of the old wooden planked boats. The pressure from the thick ice regularly squeezed the planks in until the boats filled with water up to the top of the ice level. This was okay while the ice held the boats up at water level, but when the ice melted the boats were lowered onto the canal bed. This was one advantage for having shallow moorings. After two or three pump-outs the boat planking resumed its original shape and the boats once again became watertight.

Five or six members acted on an appeal by David Hutchins of IWA and Stratford Canal Restoration fame to locate and if possible to obtain any odd items of lock paddle gear from abandoned canals for future use on the Stratford canal project. This action took place over a few expeditions up 'our' locks, first locating some traditional BCN cast iron paddle gear, acquiring and finally delivering it to the restoration depot at Lapworth. Some members helped install the paddle gear on restoration working parties and several years later more members put to use our very own lock gear when cruising down to Stratford.

During February, another long serving member appeared on the scene, this person being John Swinnerton who at this stage of his waterways activities only accompanied his brother Franklin on the odd local boat trip. However, two or three years later John "got the bug" and joined us on a more permanent footing serving for many years on the committee and also becoming a Club Trustee.

The seemingly never-ending battle against the blanket weed continued throughout the spring and summer months with most of the boaters finding time to haul some of the offensive stuff out onto the banks of the arm.

The hedge cutting advanced along the mooring together with more staging as and when it was required by the expanding number of boats now joining our Fleet.

One or two of the smaller boats were still able to fight their way to the first lock up the arm. These trips were made just for the kicks and were very enjoyable to those who managed to struggle through the weed and overhanging branches.

A noteworthy cruise was made by several of our Club members during the Whitsun Bank Holiday weekend. This was to a Rally organised by our parent body the Coventry Canal Society, and the venue Hinckley Wharf on the Ashby canal. Once again this was a successful protest rally to keep the canal from being closed even though it was still being used quite frequently for carrying coal down from Ilbot's Wharf, just short of Measham.

The Rally comprised of a couple of dozen boats and all were encouraged to cruise as far along the canal as possible. This was quite difficult due to large masses of floating rushes, thick layers of duckweed and much old timber etc. Due to the strength and vigour of the crews bow hauling our smaller boats, the "Northern Branch Fleet" managed to fly our flag the furthest.

By now we had established an annual Guy Fawkes night. This year we exceeded ourselves by burning one of our old half narrowboat conversions complete with a Guy Fawkes dummy at the helm. This took place at Kettlebrook Wharf in full view of the passing general public who no doubt thought we had all gone round the bend, burning our bridges or boats as it were.

1962 ended with our Christmas party and another four or five inches of ice and snow on the canal, and we were still under the flag of the CCS (NB).

1963

The ice age of this winter did not end until March and at its peak the ice built up to a measured 5 inches thick once again putting one or two of our boats on the bottom.

The hedge cutting and mooring extensions continued throughout 1963 and 1964 with more work party attendances on the Stratford canal thrown in. There were still plenty of reports of genuine old style working boats such as those operated by Willow Wren, Blue Line, British Waterways Board and other carrying companies intermingling with our cruisers on the local waterways including a few on our own stretch of the Coventry canal.

1964

April 1964 was the month that the Club broke its connections with the Coventry Canal Society although a fair number of our members continued their association with the society. Thus we began a period of serving under a new flag, that of the newly formed Tamworth Cruising Club.

Two more boats were sacrificed on the bonfire night celebrations of 1963 and 1964.

Part 2: UNDER THE FLAG OF THE TCC

1965

1965 saw another first-off, this being our first TCC Newsletter. This started life as a single sheet but rapidly expanded into being a very informative Club Journal. After a few issues the production was taken over by a team from Huddlesford edited by Alan Squire.

One or two points of interest covered in these early issues was a call for work parties to collect and erect a new "Standard type" mooring stage at Huddlesford using old boiler tubing and railway sleepers. The materials had to be collected from Kettlebrook which was done mainly by waterborne transport, that is by various Club boats towing our faithful old pontoon.

Another note in the Newsletter covered the proposed Annual Club subscriptions for the following year, which were to be £2.0s.0d. per person or family, the mooring fee was to be £2.10s.0d per boat per annum, regardless of size, and the Club Dinner and Dance £1.2s.6d per head.

Mick Foster joined the Club at about this time and worked his way through many jobs from running the barbecues to later becoming Vice Commodore of TCC.

A few members attended work parties restoration of the Caldon canal during the end of 1965 and early 1966.

In the outside world the Droitwich Canal Restoration Scheme was proposed and set in motion by the IWA.

1966

1966 had hardly got underway when another long serving LCC member, hove into view hauling a seventy foot long engineless narrowboat, his name being Bryan Ralph, aided by his wife - expectant mother Janet. Their plan was to cut the boat in half and build a cruiser from the better section. This was achieved both in the water and on the towpath at the end position of our moorings.

The total membership of the Tamworth Cruising Club was now 100 members and 36 boats. The mooring stage activities continued, still using the railway sleepers and tubing as fast as they could be acquired.

The other main construction job for this year was the building of the TCC Clubroom at Kettlebrook Wharf and the demolition of the original cottage.

The cruising, social functions and rallies etc were indulged in as usual.

The never ending saga of the mooring stage expansion continued throughout 1967/68/69, the progress never quite catching up with the demand.

1967

October 1967 saw now retired member Bill Harrison join our ranks with his cruiser "Milando" which was usually crewed by his very young son Mike, who is still a Club member and continues to run the original family boat.

1968

One year later, October 1968, 40 or 50 members of TCC with many from Huddlesford, went to Aston-under-Lyme which is situated near Manchester on the Cheshire Ring, to assist in the "Ashtac Dig", the famous IWA publicity restoration clean-up and repair scheme which really set the Cheshire Ring Restoration Scheme in motion.

During the latter part of 1968, a series of negotiations began with BWB for a revised lease and an extension to our mooring at Huddlesford. These transactions were not conducted over a pint in the Plough as had happened seven years previously but instead stretched over a period of time lasting well into 1969.

The outcome was that the original 800ft of mooring taken on in 1961 became official and the use of a further 200ft were unofficially allowed on the quiet. The negotiated cost was 5 shillings, that is 25 pence per foot per year.

A big event for many of the members of TCC was in helping to organise, run and to also put in the largest Club attendance at the IWA Rally at Farmers Bridge in Birmingham. Fred and Alan Squire and their respective wives were instrumental in persuading most of the Club members to attend a series of Mini Rallies in the BCN and also to put in plenty of time at rally committee meetings, work parties, etc. The Rally was a huge success with TCC Winning several awards and at the same time keeping the Club name well and truly on the map.

It was about this time that the Club welcomed David and Irene Critchley with family. David was destined to become LCCs second Commodore and Irene the Secretary, first for TCC and later for LCC.

1970

The main working party tasks at Huddlesford for 1970 were once again the rebuilding and extension of the mooring stage plus more attacks on the canal weed clearing and hedge trimming. The style of the latest staging was dictated by the materials available at the time, these being scaffolding tubes and a timber slotted platform made from ex-War Department 3" x 1½" thick batons on a 4"x2" thick framework. This staging was to serve for 15 years or so until sections of it was replaced by sheet steel piling in the late 1980s.

Another new member and his family arrived on the scene during the spring of this year in the shape of Percy and Eve Hickenbotham. Percy was to play a major part in the development of the Huddlesford moorings firstly in the role of Vice Commodore and later Commodore of the TCC and secondly as the first LCC Commodore and eventually to become the President of LCC.

A note in the Newsletter dated August 1970 stated that there was now 25 boats moored at Huddlesford with a grand total of 54 in the Tamworth Cruising Club of which we at Huddlesford were still members.

1971

1971 saw us trying to tackle the problem of boat break-ins and vandalism of various degrees of seriousness which now seemed to be getting out of hand. The police were asked to give us any help that they could, thus leading to us having talks in the Clubroom and meetings on the towpath with them. These were the fore-runners of many such sessions on this never-ending troublesome topic.

In the outside world David Hutchins was now making steady progress on the restoration of the Upper Avon Navigation between Evesham and Stratford-upon-Avon. Several of our members put in quite a lot of hours on the river work parties in-between working on our own landing stage extension which by now had reached the theoretical limit of our official mooring. This was again only just enough to accommodate the Huddlesford boats of the day.

The venue of the TCC Spring Bank Holiday rally for 1971 had to be changed from its usual place on Tixall Wide to a site at Stoke Golding on the Ashby Canal. This was due to Armitage tunnel having to be opened up to alleviate the danger of rock falls which had been experienced over the last year or two. The road was also realigned, the combined job taking several months.

Another rally took place at the end of August at Tixall after the tunnel had been opened up where all of the normal activities took place on the Wide as usual.

The Club welcomed new members Len and Dorothy Holt also Jim and Audry Blythe in the late spring of this year. Jim was voted onto the committee at the AGM and eventually became the Club Treasurer for seven or eight years.

In September 1971, a few months after Cappers Bridge had been levelled, the Club applied for planning permission to allow us to in-fill 100ft of canal at this end of the mooring. This was to be used as a car park and later as a slipway. A trial run of four or five lorry loads of scrap Thermolite building blocks was tried as in-fill but alas the transport proved to be too costly. The trial run happened before the various permissions had been granted, as usual. Later, building rubble from a more local source was used to complete the job.

As a change from working on the mooring stage, the Club's manpower was diverted to rough cutting the towpath hedge back for the entire length of the mooring.

1972

A new face-lift for the Huddlesford mooring started in January 1972 in the shape of cutting and layering the hedge that we had prepared last year. Apparently this had not been done for at least 40 years or more. The skilled part of the work was carried out by Harold Brown, the retired British Waterways tug driver and his son from Fradley Junction. The job cost £100 which was very nearly the largest amount of cash that the Tamworth Cruising Club had been required to pay out for work done so far in its history.

It took the two men a couple of weeks to complete their part of the job, his being the entire length of the mooring we now know as area 1. The effect of layering the 15ft high hedge was quite dramatic, the pessimists amongst us viewing the horror the massacre of the hedge pronouncing it would never survive its ordeal. This of course proved to be not so.

By Sunday 9th January "Perce the Vice" had organised our first hedge cutting burn-up party. 28 members duly turned up between the hours of 7.30am and 4.30pm setting to with great gusto. Among the work party were members of the future LCC Percy Hickenbotham, Arnold Cox, Jim Blythe, Molly and Doug Holt, Alan Perry and brand new members Pat Lucas and son. Pat was to be elected

onto the committee at the following AGM. Further burn-ups took place during March and April.

The Club held two rallies in 1972, one being very wet and windy during the Spring Bank Holiday based at Shackerstone on the Ashby canal, and the other on August Bank Holiday at Tixall Wide.

The first weekend of September saw another event organised, this time at Huddlesford on the field opposite to the junction end of our arm which was owned by Roy and Lucy, the landlords of the Plough at that time. The event was a fun day held on the Saturday and consisted mainly of the Club members running coconut shies, name the doll, guessing cake weights and all the usual catch penny entertainments plus a beer tent and barbecue in the evening. The Royal Navy attended in a mock-up of a frigate named "Cleopatra" built on narrowboat lines. They were on a recruitment drive tour.

Early Sunday morning saw 20 contestants competing in our first proper fishing contest to be held in the moorings. This event was the forerunner of the combined Club Open Day and Fishing Contest weekends which we ran for a few years before splitting them into separate functions.

Len Holt became the Huddlesford Harbourmaster at the AGM and John Gibbs his able assistant. Ron Fowler was welcomed to the Club via the newsletter, the year finishing with its usual Christmas and New Years Eve parties at Kettlebrook. Jim Blythe pioneered the Huddlesford Boxing Day cruise with a trip to Fradley in his boat "Jabrey II" with a crew of six all male Club members.

1973

Congratulations were offered in the January newsletter for 1973 to our Honorary Vice President Mr Tony Grantham on his inclusion in the New Years Honours List. We also read of the BWB negotiating with the local planning authority for the use of what is now our Area 4 field for the possibility of constructing a private marina. For better or for worse no-one at the time took up the options.

The Huddlesford and Kettlebrook lease agreements were now at last approaching the final stages after many years of negotiations between the Club Committee, solicitors and the BWB. The signatures of the Club trustees were eventually added to the leases, allowing all future members to enjoy a reasonable amount of security of tenure instead of living under a cloud of uncertainty endured until now.

In March, an assault was made on the last couple of hundred feet of mooring staging. We had now completed a length reaching from the main line to the position of the proposed winding hold which was being planned with BWB. The resulting total length of staging was now just enough to harbour the Huddlesford fleet of 38 boats one of the later ones belonging to new member George Jordan and family.

This was the year of the BWBs great institution, the building and commissioning of a chain of sanitary stations. 106 in all, covering most of the Boards waterway. Keys were issued to the inland cruising stalwarts for 25 pence each and were ready to use from the beginning of the years cruising season. Until now we had been on trust to dispose of the contents of our "Elsan Cans" as best we could, burying it or by any other means that came to hand.

During the springtime of this year, Huddlesford gained a new steel maintenance boat to replace our worn-out original wooden pontoon. This came via Perce the Vice's factory and was securely padlocked onto its mooring place thus deterring the local youths from taking it for trips.

An introduction to the infant Association of Waterways Cruising Clubs was made to us during the early part of the year. The function of the AWCC was generally envisaged to liaise between the BWB and member boats clubs and also to help inter-club relationships etc. Bryan Ralph was our Club

representative for several years of its early life.

The top end of the mooring was now beginning to take shape with the arrival and levelling off of 120 tons of rubble furthering the Clubs plans for building a car park and slipway.

The 1973 Spring Bank Holiday Rally was held for the first time at Tattenhill, between Branston Lock and the Bridge Inn. We had the canal to ourselves and were able to use the towpath for our various activities. The Nature Park at this point in time did not exist and was still being actively quarried.

A very quiet Tixall Rally took place on August Bank Holiday and was followed by the Clubs second barbecue and fishing contest to be held at Huddlesford again using the Plough's field as we did last year. Ideal weather conditions ensured a good attendance with plenty of entertainment stalls, fishing activities and all the fun of our Open Days.

During November, Len Holt started the Huddlesford gardening programme by digging and planting out the first garden, sited at the main line cross-over bridge adjacent to the lengthman's cottage, that is LCC's future Club house, thus establishing the pattern to be followed by a long line of future Club gardeners.

The Club Christmas parties were held at Kettlebrook and once again two boatloads of all male Boxing Day revellers tripped from Huddlesford to the Swan at Fradley.

1974

Towards the end of February 1974, another regular Club meeting was introduced. This took the form of a social meeting of Club members and friends and was held in the Plough at Huddlesford. These meetings were very popular and were called the "Huddlesford Club Pub Night". A couple of years later it took on the name of "Noggin and Natter Nights".

With the coming of the hedge growing season, each boat owner was requested to trim his section of the new look hedge to the regulation of 6ft high. These hedge trimming jobs were labour intensive and performed by using hand tools.

Several club members were planning extended cruises at about the time of the Spring Bank Holiday Rally so the site chosen for this quiet event was on the Dog and Doublet stretch of canal at Curdworth which proved to be very pleasant but a little short of mooring space for the boats. Nevertheless, everything turned out okay in the end.

The August Club Rally was another quiet but enjoyable gathering and this time was held on the long pound above Shade House lock at Fradley. The barbecue and bar were installed as usual but the parade of boats had to be called off.

September saw most of the Club boats assembled at Huddlesford for our third Barbecue and Fishing Contest weekend. The stalls and barbecue were once again situated on the Plough's field with the fishing contest being held on our moorings.

At the Club AGM, the fees were increased somewhat, the Membership Fee from £3 up to £5 per annum per family, the Entrance Fee from £5.25 to £10 and the Mooring Fee up from 50p to 60p per foot per year.

The names among the new committee members who were later to become LCC members were David and Irene Critchley - Vice Commodore and Secretary respectively, Jim Blythe - Treasurer, Pat Lucas and Len Holt - Huddlesford Harbourmasters, Arnold Cox, John Gibbs, Mick Foster and Jack Wall -

committee members.

After many months of seeking planning permission, the Cappers Lane car park which had unofficially been used for several months, was duly levelled out and left with a rough but usable surface to tide us over for the immediate future. The area was also furnished with lockable gates leading out onto the road.

The work took several weekends and were aided by a fairly new Club member, Tom Milner and his crew of youths recruited from the trusted inmates of Swinfen Hall Detention Centre. The lads were a great help, especially with the heavy mauling type of work on the moorings.

These activities plus the Christmas celebrations saw us to the end of yet another busy year, and we were still serving under the flag of the TCC.

1975

Another major project was taking shape at Huddlesford as we entered 1975. This was the winding hole now being piled and dug out by BWB. The resulting spoil from the diggings were heaped onto the towpath and the ground opposite, then sometime later used by the Club to back-fill the staging along the moorings.

On the social side of the Club activities the Huddlesford 'Pub night' in the Plough was still going strong and was reported in the Newsletter to be very popular as was the 11th TCC Annual Dinner & Dance, the cost of which had risen to £2.75 each.

Over 30 boats attended the Spring Bank Holiday Rally held once again at Tixall Wide. The usual activities took place with the addition of an excellent Treasure Hunt organised by John Gibbs which had the participants walking around the outlying area for hours on end searching out various clues etc. David Critchley set up competitions for the younger people of the Club, all of which helped to make the event quite a memorable one for everyone.

The venue of the Club annual "get together" which hadn't yet acquired the title "Open Day" was transferred from the Plough field to the BWB field, later to become known as our mooring area 4. We had only been able to cut the grass in the stall arena area, having to use our own private grass cutting implements to do this job. The visiting cars had to battle their way to the parking area across the uncut grass which was well over wheel height for most of the cars. The entertainment stalls and games were very popular during the afternoon session as were the barbecue and bonfire party of the evening.

The major event for Sunday was the usual Fishing Contest which was won with a modest three quarter pound perch. Tough luck for the contestants and congratulations to the elusive fish.

Time marched on. At the Club AGM it was mentioned that the Club membership had expanded to over 100 family memberships, a statistic which now seemed to be growing steadily week by week.

As a break from our usual work parties the Club organised a group of approximately 20 or so members to take on the task of scrub clearing and burning on a section of the Droitwich canal restoration project. The experience we had gained on the Huddlesford hedge burn-ups came in very handy, surprising the Restoration Leaders by how much progress we experts had made in just the one day.

And thus we passed through another festive season with all its attendant merriment into the year of 1976.

1976

The first part of the New Year was spent in keeping up with the ordinary maintenance jobs on our boats and moorings both at Huddlesford and Kettlebrook.

Over the previous few months there had been a growing dissatisfaction among the Huddlesford members of the Club about the lack of facilities in their moorings compared with those enjoyed at Tamworth. This situation was made apparent by notes in the Newsletter referring to keeping our small shed tidy and free from rubbish etc. The shed comprised the only Club equipment on site at the time except for a notice board recently installed against the side of the lengthman's garden hedge. But changes to this state of affairs was not so far away now.

The Tixall Spring Bank Holiday rallies were developing into being much more organised affairs than they had been for the initial few years of their existence. This was the year of the change in the pattern which remains at least until the time of writing.

The rally activities started at Huddlesford where boat crews picked up instructions for the en-route Treasure Hunt which covered the whole length of the route to Tixall Wide. The Commodore's Official welcoming speech was the prelude to bonfire, supper, refreshments and music which saw us to the end of the first day.

Sunday morning was spent indulging in bank-side pursuits as in previous years, and included decorating the boats and preparing fancy dress, the difference this year being the addition of a Theme to the decoration and fancy dress, the first being a Pirate Theme. During the afternoon the boats were paraded on the Wide as usual flaunting their full regalia which highly amused the passing holidaymakers.

The afternoon activities also included a party visit to Shugborough Hall. The party was ferried to Haywood by Arnold and Eileen Cox in their new boat "Amadeus".

The evening ended with a barbecue and prize giving. Monday morning being spent on site clearing up and eventual departure.

The Newsletter of the summer months welcomed Roger and Pam Barstead, Peter and Joan Brookes and Jim and Alma Bird. These names keep reappearing right through into the 1990s and beyond serving as officers and committee members in both LCC and TCC.

By August, Mick Foster and Percy Hickinbotham had been co-opted into heading a special committee to make the Open Day a sumptuous affair with plenty of catch penny and entertainment stalls, the motive being to swell the Club funds a little by fleecing the invited members of the general public and our friends. A big effort was made by many Club members who together with the participants had a very enjoyable time competing in welly wanging, races of all kinds, archery, tugs-of-war etc. The coppers came in on the wheel of fortune, punch boards, lucky dips, white elephant, tombola, food and all such-like activities. Model aircraft and boats were also demonstrated very skilfully by their respective supporting Club members with some of our own members being encouraged to try their hands at the controls.

The barbecue and bar did a roaring trade complete with a background of bonfires and live music. Everyone appeared to have been in a festive mood including the Club treasurer whose funds had been increased by over £400, a very clear improvement on our best money raising efforts so far.

The following day was occupied with the usual annual fishing contest.

The year so far had proved to be a very busy one with plenty of outstanding tasks being completed which included cleaning-up the winding hole area. The diggings being used to back-fill the mooring staging etc., the brickwork on Watery Lane bridge was also extensively refurbished and when finished no longer looked as it if should have been demolished years ago. More work was completed on the car park mainly laying drainage pipes, repositioning the gate and adjoining fences etc. Once again Tom Milner and his lads provided a lot of the muscle power.

In October, the venue of the "Huddlesford Pub Night" was moved from the Huddlesford Plough to the Castle Hotel at Tamworth the title of the function was now being changed to the "Noggin' and Natter" night.

The AGM saw ten future LCC members elected either as Club Officers or Committee Members. These were as listed:

Commodore	- Percy Hickinbotham
Vice Commodore	- Mick Foster
Secretary	- Irene Critchley
Treasurer	- Jim Blythe
Huddlesford Harbourmasters	- Pat Lucas and Tim Milner
Newsletter Editor	- Arnold Cox
AWCC Representative	- Bryan Ralph
Three Committee Members	- Jack Wall, John Gibbs, Doug Holt

Some of these people were of course based at Kettlebrook at the time. And so we ended another year with the usual festivities including the Boxing Day Cruises, one setting out from Kettlebrook and tripping to the Dog and Doublet and the other starting from Huddlesford and cruising to the Swan at Fradley. These events were followed by the New Year celebrations for 1977 and were held in the Clubhouse at Kettlebrook.

1977

The guest speaker for the January Club Night was one of the IWA Editors of their magazine "Navigation" whose topic was an illustrated talk on the "feasibility or otherwise of re-opening the Hatherton branch canal and the abandoned section of the Wryley and Essington canal part of which forms the TCC Huddlesford moorings". The members weren't very concerned about this at the time, their comments were mainly about how nice a short cut to the BCN it would be, but then we didn't have much to lose in those days.

The 13th Annual Club Dinner and Dance was once again held at Drayton Manor. The event was attended by 164 members and friends. The price per ticket had now risen to £4.25 each - a far cry from the cost of our first Dinner and Dance which was 18 shillings per head.

The February Newsletter bore headlines announcing our success in acquiring a "Beer and spirits licence" for use in the Clubhouse as soon as we could complete the bar and have it officially approved. The natural progression was then for the Club "Noggin and Natter" nights to be transferred to the new style Clubhouse, the first Bar Managers being Jack and Doreen Wall.

Also included in the Newsletter was a report on the BWB proposal headed "Regulations for the construction and fitting out of Pleasure craft and Houseboats." Little did we know that several of our members would still be trying to sort out some of the problems encountered while trying to comply with these regulations well into the mid 90s.

Huddlesford work parties had been piling the bank on the field side of the moorings now begins to look very commendable and is something we can all be quite proud of.

During the early part of the year, several new members were welcomed into the Club. Amongst them were Eric and Gwen Gibbons, Garrie Brookes, Carl Brister, Jim Oakes and Len Philpotts. They were the new members who were to transfer to the LCC when the time came.

The Tixall Spring Bank Holiday 1977 was dedicated to the Queens Silver Jubilee. Thus the boats were dressed overall in Red, White and Blue style with matching crews and wearing fancy dress centred around this topic, or any other well known happenings, over the previous 25 years. The usual gathering and jolly-making were indulged on Saturday and Sunday with the parade of boas taking place on the Wide but instead of returning to our mooring spots the parade headed for Great Haywood where everyone stayed for the remaining part of the Rally moored on Anglo-Welsh's private wharf. The fancy dress parade, bonfires and barbecue filled in the rest of the day.

The Club Open Day was moved forward to take place over the first weekend in July. The usual fun and catch penny events were augmented by a big effort in organising a large scale prize draw.

The organisation of the Rally and Open Day were attributed to Mick Foster who was about to have to stand down from his position as Vice Commodore due to the pressure of his business.

84 Club members attended the Club AGM on 28th October where a few new faces were elected to serve on the new committee.

The following is a list of the Officers and Members who made up the new committee and were serving in office during the period of the division of the Club into two parties one to remain as the Tamworth Cruising Club and the other to become the Lichfield Cruising Club.

PRESIDENT:	The Worship the Mayor of Tamworth
HON-VICE PRESIDENTS:	Mr G Cross and Mr W P Hickinbotham
COMMODORE:	Mr W P Hickinbotham
VICE COMMODORE:	Mr D Critchley
SECRETARY:	Mrs J Critchley
TREASURER:	Mr J Blythe
HARBOURMASTERS KETTLEBROOK:	Mr R Cooke and Mr H Sharp
COMMITTEE MEMBERS:	Mr D B Walter, Mr R Eamonson, Mr J Wall, Mr P Lucas, Mr M Foster, Mr D Holt
NEWSLETTER EDITOR:	Mr A Ward
AWCC REPRESENTATIVE:	Mr B Ralph
CLUBHOUSE STEWARDS:	Mr and Mrs H Trussler

In his final report as retiring Harbourmaster, Pat Lucas made the observation that we now have over 50 boats at Huddlesford and that things were looking good for further expansion in the future.

Due to the proposal of two or three items of heavy expenditure which were planned to take place over the next few months, an Extraordinary General Meeting was called for at the end of November to consider a proposal to raise the required funds by increasing the mooring charges. The items planned were extensive repairs to the Clubhouse roof and harbour walls at Kettlebrook, and the possibility of installing a sanitary disposal unit at Huddlesford plus the anticipation of the future increases in rent etc.

The meeting voted and carried the proposals to increase the annual Club membership fee to £10 per family and the mooring fee from 70p per foot to £1 per foot per annum.

Thus 1977 came to an end with the usual Children's Christmas Party hosted by David and Irene Critchley plus the boat trips to the 'Dog and Doublet' at Curdworth and the 'Swan' at Fradley.

THE CHANGE OVER PERIOD FROM TAMWORTH CRUISING CLUB TO LICHFIELD CRUISING CLUB

1978

1978 opened with an announcement by BWB that they intended to increase their licence charges over a range between £46 and £91 per annum for boats between 15ft and 70ft in length respectively.

At about this time rumours were beginning to get around the two Club moorings that some of the senior Club members were putting feelers out about dividing the TCC into two separate Clubs, one being based at Huddlesford and one at Kettlebrook.

These happenings coincided with the lengthman's portion of the cottage at Huddlesford becoming vacant and would soon be available for leasing on a non- residential basis. This was of course of great interest to the Club members permanently based at Huddlesford.

In the meantime, more work parties headed by Tom Milner and his "boys" had cleared the rushes from the field side of the moorings, (now area 4) and had made a rough path along the full length of the new field moorings. This did much towards smartening up our water front as well as providing future mooring spaces for another 18 to 20 boats.

During the early part of February all Club members at Huddlesford received a letter from Peter Brookes who although not yet an Officer or Committee member, felt it was his duty as an enthusiastic supporter of the Club to call an informal meeting of Huddlesford Club members to discuss the division of the Club now being considered by the committee.

So, with the committee's approval, the meeting was arranged for the 13th February 1978 at Whittington Church Hall where the Huddlesford rank and file members learned the details of the plans to be put before the overall membership at some future date.

The next communiqué dated 9th February 78 came from the Club Commodore Percy Hickinbotham and was sent to the whole of the membership of Tamworth Cruising Club, the contents of which were briefly as follows:

The letter explained that in the best interests of the Club, some Kettlebrook members were suggesting forming two financially autonomous Clubs and were thus following the correct procedure in requesting this subject to be brought to the committee for discussion.

The committee duly discussed this issue in greater depth than had originally been presented to them,

resulting in the emergence of the following factors:

1. At this moment, Huddlesford has 61% of the full TCC members which provides 63% of the income. These proportions will tend to get wider as the moorings at Huddlesford are expanded, which unfortunately cannot happen at Kettlebrook due to all of the mooring space being full to capacity.
2. Naturally Huddlesford members would like to have the use of the same level of facilities as those that Kettlebrook members have always enjoyed. Negotiations are currently underway to lease the cottage at Huddlesford to further this aim, which will inevitably increase the expenses at Huddlesford beyond the scale that they have ever previously been.
3. Bearing in mind these factors, now appears to be the right time from a financial aspect to make a division. One reason for this is that there is now available a considerable amount of money to share out, but as the proportion of members at Huddlesford grows, more money will be required to use here than at Kettlebrook in the near future.
4. Kettlebrook is financially viable on its own. At present the annual surplus would only be around £100 to £150, but rent is fixed for seven years or so over this initial period the money at Kettlebrook should build up. The condition of the moorings are good with most facilities already provided for including a fully equipped Clubhouse. Therefore a lot of cash is not required in the short term which will allow a gradual increase in mooring fees to be introduced to cover the future costs whereas Huddlesford will be facing their rent increases much earlier, that is in about 18 months time.

The conclusion that the committee reached after their first meeting and taking the above factors into consideration, was to agree unanimously the following proposition. "Investigations to be immediately commenced with a view to forming two separate Clubs from Tamworth Cruising Club and that Mr P Hickinbotham, D Walter, J Blyth and R Eamonsen to be authorised to visit the Estates Dept of BWB to find out the effect this would have on the leases".

Proposed - D Walter, Seconded - P Lucas.

It was confirmed by BWB that there will be no problems in assigning and creating a new lease at Huddlesford and therefore a second committee meeting was convened to discuss the matter further.

Three schemes were put forward at the second committee meeting and after lengthy discussion a vote was taken with the result that 11 members were in favour and 3 against of calling a General Meeting to put the attached resolutions to the members.

The letter closed stating that he was in favour of a separation and the forming of a new Club at Huddlesford and was hoping that if the resolutions are accepted by the members we can continue a close and amicable relationship between the two Clubs.

WP Hickinbotham - Commodore.

The following Notice and Agenda was enclosed with the Commodore's letter:

TAMWORTH CRUISING CLUB

Suggested Financial Procedure for the division of funds. Notice is hereby given that a General Meeting of the Club will be held at the Clubhouse on Tuesday 28th February, 1978 at 8pm for the

purpose of considering and if thought fit passing the following resolutions which will be proposed as Ordinary Resolutions.

1. That a new Club called Lichfield Cruising Club be formed from those members of Tamworth Cruising Club mooring at Huddlesford Junction.
2. That Tamworth Cruising Club agree to assign the benefit of the leases under which the land and moorings at Huddlesford are enjoyed to Lichfield Cruising Club and that Lichfield Cruising Club are empowered to complete a new lease with British Waterways Board.
3. That the constitution of Lichfield Cruising Club will be on that date when the new leases are signed by Lichfield Cruising Club and British Waterways Board.
4. That until such time as (3) is completed:
 - i) Two divisions of Tamworth Cruising Club are formed, Tamworth Cruising Club (Kettlebrook) and Tamworth Cruising Club (Huddlesford).
 - ii) These divisions will be completely autonomous and are empowered to open bank accounts, collect subscriptions, pay accounts, authorise expenditure, be liable for any debts created by them and have complete control over their assets and funds.
5. The division of funds between two autonomous sections are laid out in the financial statement circulated to members of Tamworth Cruising Club be accepted and implemented.
6. That every member of Tamworth Cruising Club be given the right to elect whether he (or she) wishes to become a member of Lichfield Cruising Club when the Club is properly constituted and to notify in writing such election to Tamworth Cruising Club.
7. That the Committee at Tamworth Cruising Club shall be empowered to conduct the negotiations and instruct the trustees to implement resolution (2).
8. That the two divisions of Tamworth Cruising Club as created by resolution (4) be empowered to elect Officers and Committee and until such time as that can be effected the members of Tamworth Cruising Club shall act on the committees of the divisions that elect to join.

I H Critchley, Secretary

ALLOCATION OF FUNDS AND ASSETS

Allocated as follows:

HUDDLESFORD

Clubhouse £500

Funds £2,741.28 57% £3,241.28

KETTLEBROOK

Clubhouse

Funds £2,067.98 43% £2,067.98

Therefore, Huddlesford would receive £3,241.28 cash and keep what equipment it has.

Kettlebrook would receive £2,067.98 and keep what equipment it has.

The March 1978 TCC Newsletter was the last one to be produced in its original form, that is covering the news to members at both Kettlebrook and Huddlesford moorings. From the Commodore's comments page we had the confirmation of the official results of voting on the resolutions for the division of the TCC into two separate Clubs as were passed at the EGM last month.

The results were 69 votes for and 51 against the resolutions.

Therefore as from the EGM until the Huddlesford lease has been assigned to the Lichfield Cruising club the two moorings became known as TCC (Kettlebrook) and TCC (Huddlesford). Each mooring was to be controlled by their own Officers and Committee.

The 14th Annual Dinner Dance (TCC) was held on 4th March 1978 with 160 members and friends in attendance. The price of the tickets had now risen to £5 each.

The first TCC (Huddlesford) Newsletter was produced in April and consisted of just a single fact sheet giving a diary of events until the end of the Club year.

Forms were provided to all Club members to complete and return to the Secretary Mrs Irene Critchley, stating their preference of mooring - either at Huddlesford or Kettlebrook.

On Friday 14th April the Huddlesford branch held its first monthly Club meeting in a temporary venue in the old wooden Whittington Church Hall. The event was an inter-Club Canal quiz, our opponents being the Trent and Mersey Canal Society who beat us by a narrow margin.

The May Newsletter was the first full edition one for Huddlesford members.

In the Commodore's comments section, Percy Hickinbotham welcomed the ex-Kettlebrook members who had elected to transfer to Huddlesford. The people concerned were David and Irene Critchley who automatically became our Vice Commodore and Secretary until the time of the next AGM. Howard Sharp continued as Assistant Harbourmaster and was accompanied by his wife Mary, Bryan and Janet Ralph were welcomed to Huddlesford with Bryan willing to continue as our AWCC representative and last but not least Jack and Doreen Wall carrying on as committee members and Bar Managers as and when a bar comes into being again.

The Commodore then continued with the news that BWB have agreed to assign the existing lease for the land and mooring to the Lichfield Cruising Club, that is when their solicitors have sorted out the documents and we have rearranged the Club titles etc. This was followed with the stop-press news that half of the cottage is now ours subject to final agreements being made regarding the rental charges and the terms of the lease.

The cottage rental for a term of 20 years was to be £312 per annum (subject to review).

While the paperwork was proceeding, work parties including Tom Milner's lads plunged into the job of clearing up the cottage cellars and surrounds.

A builder friend of Jack Wall's out for a relaxing trip on Jack's boat, got himself involved in pointing up the brickwork and later renovating the roof and guttering of the cottage, his name being Bryan Thompson. He and his wife Beryl, have been members of the Club ever since.

The Miss Cappers, our ancient spinster neighbours, were observed now and again to be wandering around the gardens trying to puzzle out what was happening to their nice and so peaceful way of life. They didn't have to worry unduly and soon settled down to the fact that they were gaining dozens of new friends.

Adding to this hive of activity, Len Holt was to be seen busy scrounging plants from anyone who showed any interest in his ever increasing garden domain.

A few days after the May Newsletter was issued, all Huddlesford members received a Special Carnival issue of the Newsletter giving details of the Tixall Rally arrangements.

Included in the Commodore's comments page was a paragraph reassuring us that the paperwork for the changeover was going through fairly smoothly and that at a Special Committee meeting the four new Trustees who were Percy Hickinbotham, Pat Lucas, John Swinnerton and Jim Blythe formally inaugurated the Lichfield Cruising Club and then invited the Officers and Committee members of TCC (Huddlesford) to become the first members of the Club. This formality was necessary to enable negotiations to take place with BWB for the cottage which now has to be leased by LCC under its new name, that is Lichfield Cruising Club.

The first TCC (Huddlesford) Rally was held at the Spring Bank Holiday on Tixall Wide and took on a South American theme. 40 boats attended, an en-route quiz was competed for by most of the crews who seemed to thoroughly enjoy pitting their brains against each other.

Saturday was taken up by the arrival of the boats, setting up the tents and bar etc, the day being rounded off making merry playing floodlit darts and feeding as usual.

The following morning saw the majority of the members joining in the boat handling competitions before getting their decorations ready for the parade of boats around the Wide for half an hour or so, at the end of the last lap the fleet following last years procedure headed off to moor up for the night at Anglo Welsh Cruisers, once again as guests of Mike and Pat Hillman. Our President Mr Tony Grantham and Grace his wife presented the prizes for the best dressed boat, fancy dress and our new Darts Champions. More merry making took place again lasting well into the small hours. Perfect weather made the weekend a very enjoyable one for all.

On 14th June 1978, Lichfield Cruising Club officially took possession of the ex-lengthman's part of the Huddlesford cottage.

By now, the debris had been cleared out of the cottage and the anti-vandal steel protection sheets removed from the windows. A set of temporary curtains were organised by the ladies which helped to give the place its old look of belonging once again.

The announcement of the Club's acquisition of the property seemed to give us all a renewed enthusiasm to help with carrying out our renovation and rebuilding plans, sometimes forging ahead of the local planning authorities, thus getting ourselves into trouble by jumping the gun occasionally. A small army of work party volunteers descended on the cottage over the next few months and led by our key workers got going on the repositioning of some of the walls, doors and window frames and started making great progress with the construction of the new steel framework required to support the Clubroom floor and chimneys.

As soon as the dust began to settle, the "fine detail" teams of our workforce began their part of the renovation. This included panelling the walls and decorating throughout, rewiring and fitting the lighting and electrical appliances, replumbing the kitchen and toilets etc plus many other odd jobs too

numerous to count.

The rear garden of the cottage didn't escape the upheaval, the levels of the ground being graded to blend in with that at the front of the cottage and also the mooring area. The towpath hedge bordering the garden was removed opening up a long view from the Commodore's mooring position down to the stream. Eventually the whole of the original garden area was grassed over.

Meanwhile, in between the work parties, the normal activities of the Club carried on as usual. One of these was a coach trip to visit the North Cheshire Cruising Club on the Macclesfield Canal where a very enjoyable day was spent cruising the canal, wining and dining with our hosts and rounding off the evening by dancing to lively disco music. The usual exchange of Club pennants took place, all helping to establish a long and friendly association between the two clubs.

The annual Club Open Day was held on Saturday 16th September with between 300 and 400 people attending including about 80% of our own membership. This was approximately 30 or 40% more of our Club members joining in than we would normally expect to get for this sort of event and was probably in response to our Commodore's appeal for maximum support for the day. We were all hoping to make a lot of money to help to pay some of the expenses incurred in the Clubhouse renovations so with this in mind the Committee decided to organise another large external draw and keep our fingers crossed on the final result.

The day proved to be a great success with the stalls and entertainment events being well patronised. A large bonfire, bar and a disco dance which was held under canvas nicely rounded the day off. On top of all this we emerged with a creditable £780 to boost our Club funds, this made everyone happy.

While all of these activities were taking place, the Club membership at Huddlesford was increasing in leaps and bounds. Among the new members were Graham and Sue Mercer, Arthur and Joan Hutchins, Hilton and Christine Hanson, Graham and Jenny Pratt, Keith Willis, Henry Powell, Garry Cooper, Terry Thomas and their wives all of whom joined us between April and September 1978, several of them to become very prominent members and future officers of the Club.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE LICHFIELD CRUISING CLUB

A notice in the last issue of the TCC (Huddlesford) Newsletter dated September 1978, informed us of the final meeting of the elected officers and Committee of Tamworth Cruising Club which took place on Thursday 28th September 1978. At this meeting, all of the relevant documents were signed in connection with the assigning of Huddlesford mooring leases from Tamworth Cruising Club to Lichfield Cruising Club.

Therefore, as from that meeting, all members based at Huddlesford automatically became members of Lichfield Cruising Club and were then entitled to display flags, badges, names etc of Lichfield Cruising Club on our boats.

The following is a full list of Club members at the birth of Lichfield Cruising Club, the total amount being 65 members plus wives.

Allen R J	Bailey J (Mrs)
Bailey R (Mrs)	Barsted R
Beddoes D	Bird J T
Blythe JR	Bowden J P
Brister C	Brookes G
Brookes P J	Cooper G E
Cooper R	Cox A J

Critchley S D	Dalton M
Else J	Foster M
Fowler R	Foy A
Fulbrook R E	Gibbins E
Gibbs J M	Grantham A V
Hanson H T	Harrison W
Henman A E	Hickinbotham W P
Holt D	Holt L
Houliston J	Hutchins A
Jordan G	Leggatt M
Lucas P T	Mercer G
Milner T J	Oakes J
Penn A	Penny J E
Perks D	Perry A W
Philpotts L J	Powell H N C
Pugh C R	Pratt G R
Ralph B C	Sharp H
Simpson F	Smith J E
Squire A	Squire F
Swinerton J	Tate D
Thomas T	Thompson B
Thompson W	Wall W J
Ward A	Whitfield D
Willis K	Wilson G J
Woodward J H	Woodward W J
Young R	

The first regular annual function to be organised by the LCC was the Club Laying Up Supper which was held on Friday 14th October 1978, at our regular meeting place, that is Whittington Church Hall. The meal was combined with a Barn Dance which was thoroughly enjoyed by the 96 members and friends who took part.

The following weekend saw Bryan, Janet and a still very young Ian Ralph bow hauling our Commodore's boat "Norwind", complete with crew and official Council Dignitaries from Lichfield. The event was a sponsored "Bow Haul" from Kettlebrook to Huddlesford and was in aid of the RNLI funds. Some of our members escorted them in their own boats cruising along in convoy and taking the opportunity to collect more donations from the towpath users and other unsuspecting people in Fazeley and Hopwas villages. A very merry time was had by the Council Dignitaries and also by most of their hosts.

The first Lichfield Cruising Club - Annual General Meeting was held on Friday 27th October 1978. The Officers and nine Committee Members were elected. All of the Committee Members who served last year were re-elected, with the addition of Len Holt, Bryan Ralph and Roger Barsted. Tony Ward was pressed into editing the Newsletter for another 12 months.

Thus the Committee for the coming year was as listed below:

PRESIDENT:	Mr A V Grantham
COMMODORE:	Mr W P Hickinbotham
VICE COMMODORE:	Mr D Critchley

SECRETARY: Mrs I H Critchley

TREASURER: Mr J R Blythe

HARBOURMASTER: Mr T Milner

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Mr M Foster, Mr P Lucas, Mr J Wall, Mr J Swinnerton, Mr D Holt,
Mr H Sharp, Mr R Barsted, Mr L Holt, Mr B Ralph

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Mr A Ward

Thus Lichfield Cruising Club began its first full year under its own flag.

For three or four years a few members had been celebrating Christmas by having a pre-Christmas lunch together. They enjoyed it so much that it was repeated with more people joining in each year. By now, it had grown to such an extent that it was put on the Club's official list of annual events and was called simply the Club Christmas Lunch and has been held at the Chequers Inn, Hopwas, ever since. This time it was held on Sunday 17th December 1978 and was declared a huge success.

On this happy note, we entered the year 1979 - a year of great activity.