

## SABRINA

Her massive hulk rose starkly from the inky black canal as I stumbled along the dangerously slippery bank. This was Sabrina, the first floating Youth Hostel. It was, however, difficult to tell this in the dark and I began to wonder if I was on the wrong boat as I walked round and round the deck trying to find a door. At last I detected a black hatch cover and the bellow of certain raucous voices announced the presence of Croydon Group.

The actual hostel is situated in the hold of the converted barge, with dormitories and a galley-cum-common room. No gas, only electricity, which means a long wait for coffee but otherwise is very good for toast.

After a curious mishap by which Dave Parker mislaid his clothes and alarmed passing motorists by his state of undress as he pranced around the deck, we spent a very good evening in the pub. With three guitars and voices full blast, the locals soon gave up their original idea of a quiet chat with their darts, and ended up singing louder than we were.

By 11.15 p.m. the warden decided that Dave had had enough 'curious' mishaps for one day and suggested that it was time for bed. By midnight all was dark and silent in the girls' dormitory when suddenly loud strains of "Happy Birthday" assailed our ears. Disappointingly, 21 thuds did not accompany it, nor even a single splash!

Next morning Sabrina was afloat and some time was spent attempting to cast her adrift and shift her moorings. During this yet another mishap befell Dave. Surely it is possible to climb down two feet of rope without losing one's grip and falling into the canal? We then watched the Group canoes being put to good use by a group from Pontefract who, after a few minutes, agreed with us that they leaked. After half an hour they had their first capsizal.

The rest of the morning was spent in taking York by surprise (although there was no-one around to be surprised!) and storming the ramparts of the castle remains. By extremely clever strategic planning this was carried out under the very nose of a notice saying "Keep off the bank."