

## **Saving the Corona - Mr J of Scarborough**

Mr J remembers the major flood of 31 January 1953. Because of the personal issue caused by the flood to his family, he remembers many of the statistics relating to the event. He said that there were 1,200 breaches of sea defences in England; 24,000 properties were flooded; 307 people were killed and 32,000 people had to be evacuated from their homes. There was also a massive effect on agriculture with 46,000 cattle killed.

In Scarborough, the North Bay beach huts were destroyed and their contents washed into the sea. All of the South Bay commercial premises were flooded. Mr J's father was the owner of the pleasure boat the Corona which was moored in the harbour and his father received a call to say that she had shifted so that her stern was out towards the centre of the harbour. Other vessels were breaking free of their moorings and being sucked out to sea.

Mr J's father telephoned the Corona's Captain, and they arranged to meet on site. Mr J well remembers accompanying his father on that rather exciting trip in his father's car. When they arrived at the harbour, they found that the flood levels were such that the piers themselves were under water. He drove along the pier through the flood waters to the Corona's mooring and saw that the rise and fall of the vessel was causing the rubbing strip to catch on the tops of the piles risking major damage to the boat. Mr Johnston's father needed to get out to deal with the problem and to get her re-tied to her mooring. He was concerned that if he turned off the car engine, water might be sucked up the exhaust and render his car unusable. He, therefore, asked his son to move into the driver's seat and with the engine still running he instructed his son, who was about 10 years old at the time, to gently keep the accelerator pedal running at just above idle in order to keep the exhaust pushing out air to prevent water ingress. The water level was above the exhaust but lower than the car's sill level.

In the meantime, his father and his Captain managed to source some fenders and pulled the vessel round alongside the pier. In this way they managed to save the boat.