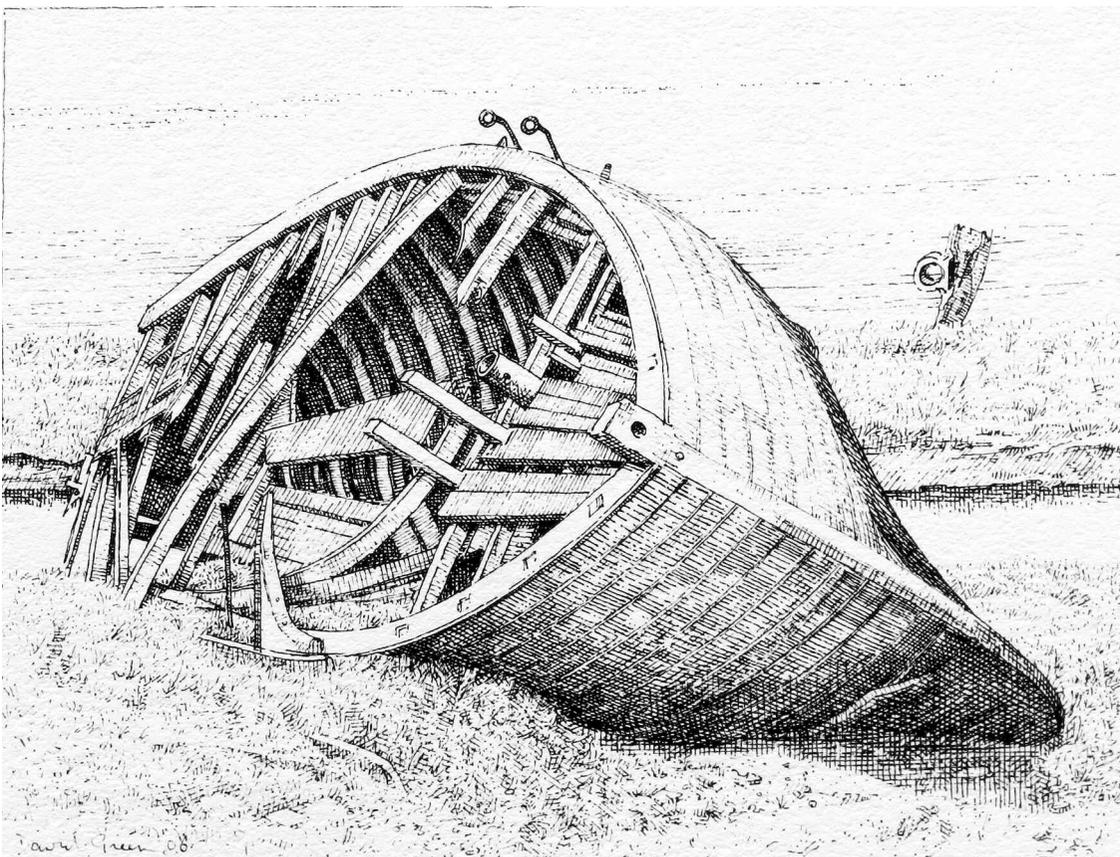


The Deben



43 Autumn 2011

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Officers and Committee
October 2011**

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The DEBEN

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(Cover ‘The Whale’- David Green 2006)

EDITORIAL

Who Protects the Deben?



As members of the RDA we share a passion for the Deben. It is a unique river with a special landscape character and history. Maybe you thought like I did, that its landscape, and environment would be protected because of the various designations associated with the Deben. It is an AONB, a Special Protection Area, an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) and a RAMSAR wetland site. Much of the Deben is an SSSI as well as a Special Landscape Area.

Whether or not you are for or against the pontoon proposed by Waldringfield Sailing Club it is an interesting case study in how these agencies work or don't work depending on your point of view.

The Lease granted by the Crown Estate to the Trustees of the Waldringfield Fairways Committee prohibits the construction of a pontoon or any activity which causes annoyance to the neighbourhood. However, The Crown Estate has invited the Trustees to consider applying for a 'one off relaxation' of the relevant clause provided the necessary statutory consents are obtained.

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has a responsibility for granting licences for any 'constructions' in the water below the high tide mark. In this process they consult many agencies including The Crown Estate, SCDC, Natural England, Trinity House, the Navigation and Safety Branch and so on. However, it was surprising to learn that they had not heard of Fairways Committees and did not know what they do!!

Trinity House had no concerns about safety, possibly because they felt the pontoon did not extend beyond the low water mark.

Natural England did not feel that the pontoon would have any impact on estuarine processes or would cause additional disturbance to birds in the area. Neither did they feel that the pontoon would have any detrimental impact on the Site of Special Scientific Interest provided the works were not carried out in the breeding season.

The Suffolk Coasts and Heaths Management Unit (AONB) have not objected to the pontoon. They feel 'that the visual intrusion did not warrant an objection from the AONB and that access along the beach was maintained by means of the steps on each side of the pontoon and had no adverse affect on the public right of way that runs along the sea wall.'

The Environment Agency did not have any objections provided the pontoon was designed in a way that would prevent it from breaking or disengaging during a 1:200 surge event.

Cefas, a branch of Defra, commented that an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required because the works do not fall under the scope of a 'relevant project' as defined in the Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 2007. An Appropriate Assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Species regulations is not required because 'of the location, nature and scale' of the project. Similarly, they suggest that the proposed works, because of their nature and scale, will not have a negative impact on the SPA or the SSSI or fish resources in the area.

The SCDC planning officer carefully reviewed the relevant policies adopting a 'conciliatory' stance. At the time of writing

it is not known what conclusion members of the Planning Committee will reach.

While none of the many 'statutory' agencies consulted raised objections, 162 people, together with the local parish council, did - a significant number for a local planning application. Many who objected to the pontoon did so, because they were concerned about the conservation and protection of the river and a unique landscape and beach.

Somehow the process, involving as it did extensive consultations with numerous agencies, seems to have missed the point and does not seem to have properly debated and evaluated the issues which people care about. Consideration of the 'whole' is somehow lost in this reductive process.

It poses the question 'how confident can we be that existing planning processes adequately work to reflect the interests of the river as a whole'?

Those of you familiar with building work will know about the role of a 'party wall' surveyor. The surveyor represents 'the wall', not the interests of the people on either side.

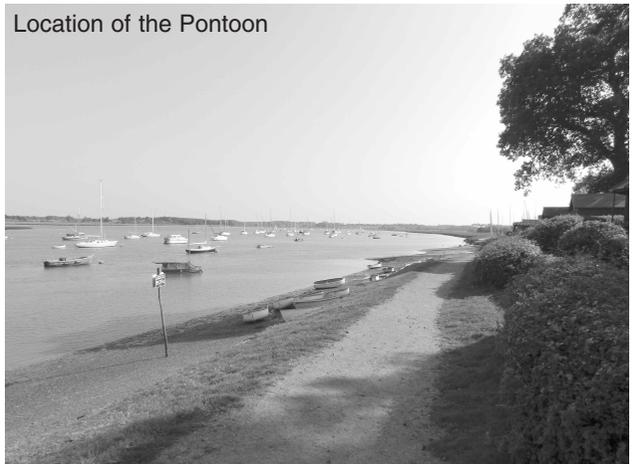
So who represents the Deben? Some of you may say 'Well how can you represent a river?' But how would the river be managed if it was managed by the National Trust? Suppose it was a National Park? How would issues like this be resolved? Would principles be applied which would look at the river as a whole, rather than in the disjointed way that seems to be the case at the moment?

Could this be a central role for the RDA and if so what would the RDA need to do if it

was to take this on?

Perhaps the RDA should develop a statement about the qualities and character of the river which its members value and want to protect? This might go on to consider the principles and policies which could be used to assess any proposals affecting the river. Members of the RDA could be asked to endorse these principles and this would give committee members a mandate which would enable them to be effective on groups such as the DEP, particularly now that a Deben Estuary Plan has been proposed.

Location of the Pontoon



In this edition we pick up on some of the themes of the last edition including the ongoing concerns about the Rocks at the Ferry. Paul Ruffles recalled that his Grandfather Bob had delivered supplies to the Cement Factory by barge and Peter Uloth continues the Eversons theme with a history of the Kingfisher dinghy. Martin Atkinson has provided a fascinating article on the Coprolite Industry and we have the second part of the interview with Mike Steen of the Environment Agency which helps to provide the context of current debates. John Palmer having seen the the picture of 'The Whale' recognised it as the Enigma and we began to explore the history of the hull on the saltings.

CHAIRMAN'S BULLET-POINTS

The RDA committee has not been idle during the past 6 months. Rather than a long report, the following summarise its main concerns:

- Informal discussion with a powerboat representative over the possible publication of a **Deben Code** has proved fruitless.
- This year's **Autumn Open Meeting** will be held at Walton Community Hall, Felixstowe, on Friday 28th October. Details are on the back cover.
- The second **Deben Forum**, to which representatives of Deben-based organisations will be invited, will be held at Woodbridge Cruising Club at 9.30am on Saturday 19th November.
- Following lengthy deliberation, the RDA's website page "**Deben Guidelines: Ashore and Afloat**" is being made less prescriptive, more comprehensive, and will include more links.
- Over 200 members now receive **news and notices by email**. Others with email addresses are urged to notify the Secretary at chriswendy@talktalk.net.
- The possibility of the RDA becoming a shareholder in the proposed **Waldringfield Community Boatyard** is under consideration.
- In line with views expressed by several members, a representation was made to SCDC opposing the **proposed WSC pontoon** in the absence of an independent environmental impact assessment and a review of health and safety issues.
- Progress towards the possible purchase of the former **Whisstocks** site by the Riverside Trust is welcomed.

- Representation was made to East Anglia Offshore Wind Ltd concerning the plan to bring cabling from the **East Anglia ONE windfarm** ashore close to the mouth of the Deben. A commitment to underground all cabling between this point and the connection to the National Grid at Bramford was welcomed, although a watching brief will be maintained.

- Plans to develop **Everson's boatyard**, which include residential holiday accommodation, are not considered detrimental; nor are the revised plans for a **workshop behind the Tide Mill**.

- The RDA plans to work with SC&H AONB on one or more hands-on projects designed to increase **children's and young people's awareness of and concern for the estuary**.

- The association will continue to press SCDC to take strong mitigation measures to protect the Deben and its valley from adverse impacts from the proposed **Adastral Park** housing scheme.

- Peter Thubron has agreed to stand as **RDA Treasurer** at the 2012 AGM when Chris Brown retires from the post after many years. A new **Membership Secretary** is also being sought, while new members for the General Committee are always welcomed.

- Three members of the RDA serve on the Deben Estuary Partnership, and are contributing to the DEP's deliberations with the Environment Agency over the formulation of the **Deben Plan** (formerly called the Deben Estuary Strategy).

Leigh Belcham
RDA Chairman

NEWS FROM THE HARDS

WOODBIDGE



Our correspondent has returned from extensive cruising in Scandinavia. We should get an update in the next edition

NOTES FROM WALDRINGFIELD HARD

Our hard is currently the focus of three matters closely related to this stretch of the beloved Deben. The BT plan for 'development' of Adastral New Town on Waldringfield Heath, the Waldringfield Sailing Club's application for a pontoon near the clubhouse and the prospective sale of the Waldringfield Boatyard.

Suffolk Coastal District Council, in full session on 27 July 2011, resolved to "progress the Reviewed Core Strategy document subject to the Sustainability Appraisal and Appropriate Assessment documents being updated." While the consultation on those two specific documents runs until 14 October, it seems unlikely that the full Council resolution will be reversed; unless certain legal challenges that have been mooted are made and sustained by a Court.

Consequently some 2,000 new homes nearby plus the Haven Gateway - the ports of Felixstowe, Ipswich, Mistley and Harwich and their hinterland - having been identified as a nationally significant growth area, suggest the Waldringfield stretch of the Deben AONB is almost bound to face increasing pressures. There will be more

visitors on and beside the River, and of course their cars trying to reach the road head, primarily at the Maybush. Fortunately parking there is limited and Cliff Road has a 20mph limit, speed bumps and few passing places. This 'throttling' of traffic is of course an inconvenience to residents, who at times find it difficult to leave their own driveway, but is perhaps a blessing in disguise. How can we get visitors to park prettily away from the road head and benefit physically and spiritually by walking?

Turning to the WSC proposed pontoon, SCDC's relevant committee decided to make a site visit on 26 September and will presumably decide a few weeks later (13th October). Even if SCDC do approve despite letters of objection outnumbering letters of support by 3:1, many of which you RDA members may have written, the Crown Estate would have to extract the pontoon's area from the lease to the Waldringfield Fairway Committee's deed. As that deed authorises four trustees who have openly opposed the proposed pontoon, this apparently very parochial matter will still be sub-judice.

Meanwhile Waldringfield Boatyard is being offered for sale as a going business. Many will be familiar with the orange-hulled Jahaan on pleasure cruises up to Woodbridge and down to Felixstowe ferry. As this is WBY's biggest single source of income and is evidently much appreciated by about 5,000 people per year, it seems highly likely to carry on under any altruistic new management. WBY also thrives on a competitively priced mooring, craneage and winter storage package.

Most users and devotees of this stretch of the Deben and local residents want the Waldringfield boatyard to continue much as it has done since Ernie and Harry Nunn's days. That is profitably and if possible with boat building and repair work as a further feature. A number of us consider that

storage in the compound behind the Maybush car park is essential for a sustainable boatyard on the Quay. Consequently, we have initiated a potential Waldringfield Boatyard Community Interest Company with a view to locking in the assets so the community of river users plus local residents who invest in WBYCIC can control them for generations to come. Clearly it will be vital to support the individual who becomes responsible for actually running the yard day to day. He or she must not be subjected to sectional or individual pleading that would hinder economic survival of the yard!



Last but not most importantly, WBY already has a pontoon, which could better satisfy six of the WSC's eight justifications for its club pontoon. It is already available for landing any casualties and is obviously much closer to the road for any ambulance. Most yachts and powerboats could get water and fuel and embark people and stores more easily and for a much wider tidal-range than could the proposed WSC pontoon. The existing WBY pontoon would need slight strengthening and changes so the Jahaan's all-tide berth and disabled access is reserved. This alternative now seems so obviously a better way to meet WSC's expressed needs that a small team of us are working on it pro bono publico. If you might even consider investing, do please get in touch with Jackie McKellar or

Neil Winship 01473-736716 or -736423 respectively as soon as possible if not already on our list.

Neil Winship

ADASTRAL PARK - UP DATE FROM NANT

At the beginning of July NANT's lawyers reiterated their previous comments regarding the errors in the Appropriate Assessment (AA) amongst other things and informed the council that failure to address these errors would result in legal action against the council. The officers and the deputy leader of the council admitted that there were many issues still to be resolved, in particular, understanding the impact on the Deben Estuary SPA of allocating 2000+ houses at BT Martlesham. They admitted that previous assessments had been carried out using out of date and inappropriate surveys and as a result conclusions had been drawn on anecdotal rather than factual evidence. Under NANT's threat of legal action they agreed to revise the assessment. They also, apparently at the last moment, realised that the council is obliged to put this revised document to public consultation. This consultation period ends on October 14th.

The revised AA acknowledges some of the previous errors and makes a few corrections in terms of car parking availability at places such as Waldringfield. It also mentions the Deben Visitor Survey commissioned by NANT. The AA now agrees with NANT that the allocation of 2000+ houses at Martlesham will increase the visitor numbers to the Deben SPA. It recommends that further studies/visitor surveys take place but then goes on to say that this is not required for the council's core strategy. In a completely illogical way, the AA then maintains its original conclusion that as long as the houses are

more than 1km from the Deben SPA and “mitigation” is implemented there will be no adverse effect. However the council seem disinclined to ensure that such mitigation is deliverable.

Full details of the changes in the AA and the SA can be found on the NANT website www.noadastralnewtown.com

If you are concerned about protecting the Deben SPA and would like to comment on the revised documents, please do so before 4.45pm on October 14th by writing to SCDC on Melton Hill Woodbridge or on line at www.suffolkcoastal.org.uk

Janet Elliot

FELIXSTOWE FERRY

The Allison Theresa (See The Deben 41) has been launched. She was built in Whitstable in 1971 as a trawler and was still operating out of Harwich 2010. She is 46 feet long and weighs 28 tons. ‘She has been totally refitted to a high standard as a cruising restaurant at Felixstowe Ferry Boatyard’. She has begun service as Deben River Cruises and provides three hour cruises up the Deben with a meal during the cruise.



Deben Trojen as well as servicing the moorings at the Ferry has travelled far and wide carrying out a range of work including harbour work and the construction of

windfarms. Andrew Moore has taken pity on the workers who had to sleep in the engine compartment during the winter with no heating. The wheelhouse is currently being extended aft and this will provide two births and a galley.

THE ROCKS

A Consultative Workshop (4th October) has been organised by the Environment Agency on 4th October to consider the way forward for the problems with the rock armour defences at the Ferry. Royal Haskoning, Black and Veatch and a number of community representatives will be attending. Simon Reed will be representing the RDA and will be speaking at the meeting

BAWDSEY QUAY

The Ferry has continued to run however, licence is an annual license with a six month break clause. There is concern that this does not give the Ferry operator enough security. I understand that Bawdsey Manor wants the service continue and If this is the case it would be helpful if a statement to this effect was made public.

THE DEBEN ESTUARY PLAN

Trazar Astley – Read of the DEP writes:

The traditional approach - where the EA draw up a strategy - is to change. Now the Flood Risk Management information will be integrated into a wider, more inclusive approach to estuary planning. ***Flood risk and estuary defences will be planned along side the needs of communities, landowners, businesses, tourism and recreation.***

The Deben Estuary Partnership (DEP), in association with the Environment Agency (EA) and Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB Unit (SCH), will lead this new approach.

Landowners, businesses, Parish Councils and community organisations can be involved in formulating the Plan and will, therefore, have greater local influence over the future of the estuary.

The new Plan will focus on what can be delivered within a given time-frame with proposals assessed for sustainability and long-term impact. The Plan will include:

- **An Action Plan** - covering a realistic 10 to 25 year period.
- **A Funding Framework** - recognising that Central Government funding will not be able to pay for all the flood defence work that people would like to see in the estuary. A funding framework will look towards identifying a wide range of financing options – both traditional and innovative. The aim will be to align potential funding streams with activities over 10 year periods - allowing time for new money to be sought and bid for.
- **A Planning Framework** – ensuring activities and opportunities within the estuary are recognised by and integrated with other planning and management policies.

The RDA will have two representatives on the group.

THE DEBEN ESTUARY SHORE AT FELIXSTOWE FERRY

During the storms of 1953 the shoreline of the Deben estuary at Felixstowe Ferry changed dramatically. A three bedroom bungalow and several beach huts were washed away. The land in front of our bungalow (100 yards south of Martello Tower 'U') including a garage, a large boatshed and a beach hut all went. The waves were now breaking just a few feet from the verandah to the bungalow. We

were very lucky!

We were even more fortunate when, during the next two years, the concrete wall with groins was constructed. This stretched from just upstream of Martello Tower 'U' to 200 yards south of our bungalow. Very quickly (within two years) the beach grew back to a line where it had been before the 1953 flood (see Figure 1a - note the red can at the end of the groin almost buried by the beach).



a) Looking south



b) Looking north

Figure1: Beach from 1960 to 2011.

The channel at the mouth of the River Deben has never been stable. Each year the channel marks have to be re-aligned. It is like the wagging of a dog's tail. Only a

few years back the channel stretched out parallel to the shore nearly as far as the Dip. On returning to the more normal course it left a large lagoon near the Martello Tower 'T' (see Figure 2). I remember similar lagoons being formed in the late 1940s (where my friends and I used to race our home made boats – pieces of wood with a stick stuck in at one end and a piece of paper with two holes threaded on to the stick).



Figure 2: Lagoon formed within the beach

The sandbanks enclosing the estuary have continually altered in size and shape. The total amount of gravel does not appear to have altered, just its arrangement. For many years now the beach off the corner of the Bawdsey point has been growing. The sheet piling around this corner was first driven in place in the late 1940s. Wooden groins were still being used at that time and a new set was placed outside the sheet piling. I remember some spectacular sights, during the flood tide at high water, when a fresh sea breeze was blowing from the south east. Six foot waves would crash against the sheet piling sending up 50 foot high spumes of spray.

At that time the beach outside the Sailing Club stretched out thirty yards and most of the dinghies were left on the beach in front of the club house.

The maintenance of wooden groins along this part of the coast came to an end during the 1950s. Where maintenance or further protection was required, it was normally in the form of steel sheet piles or concrete walls, slabs and hybrid groins (steel or concrete posts with timber boarding infilling).

The growing size and numbers of ships sailing in and out of Felixstowe Docks since the 1970s has required dredging of the main channel out of Harwich. The effect of this on the shore at Felixstowe Ferry is difficult, if not impossible to estimate. However, there can be little doubt that it has had a marked affect on the erosion of the shore in Felixstowe Bay. It is alleged that up to recently the dredged material was sold to the Netherlands, where it was used to help with the sea defences there. The knock on effect of the scouring in Felixstowe Bay must have had some influence on the erosion at Cobbolds Point and probably round the corner to the Dip.

In the late 1970s much defence work was carried out between Cobbolds Point and the shore adjacent to Martello tower 'U'. This included a new concrete wall with slabs and groins.

The extraordinary fact about this project was that its north limit did not reach the end of the wall created in the 1950s built in front of our bungalow. It left a gap of unprotected shore 400 yards long. The seawall in this stretch was left as gravel and earth with a grass covering. At the time there was a large build up of gravel in this area but only a brief glance at the history of the entrance to the Deben would have warned that this could disappear within one storm. The extra cost to fill the gap would have been less than 10% of the total work within that project which was two miles long with a lot of complications for access to the sea at the Dip.

In the 1980s the shape of the shoreline at the bottleneck of the Deben adjacent to the Sailing Club changed radically. The entire beach in front of the Club House disappeared and the erosion would have continued if quick action had not been taken to reverse the trend. A large number of concrete tetrahedrons (4 foot between corners) were cast nearby and lifted into place to build out a promontory just down river from the ferry jetty. This projected 30 yards out into the channel. The inner area was then filled with gravel.

Unfortunately the result of this work turned out to be a failure. It became home to hundreds of rats. The outer edge of the concrete caused a lot of vertical scouring from the strong currents through the bottle neck. It was dismantled and the concrete blocks removed in the early 1990s

In the late 1990s it was decided to call in a Consulting Engineer, Royal Haskoning, to design the revetment in front of the sailing club. Two rock groins placed between the Sailing Club and Martello Tower 'U' were included in this design. During construction of this work the gravel sea wall adjacent to Martello Tower 'T' came under threat from erosion. This had been caused by the strong currents in the channel which had bent close inshore at that time. The decision to increase the rock sea delivery order to provide a further rock groin opposite this Martello tower was taken.

The result of this work has been to stabilise the shore between the Sailing Club and Martello Tower 'U'. There has been a steady build up of more gravel in this area.

The new rock groin opposite Martello Tower 'U' has caused further problems and some questionable decisions. During the flood tide a strong eddy occurred upstream of the groin. This rapidly scoured out the face of the sea wall leaving it exposed to

any storm that might occur unexpectedly. If the sea wall was broken in such conditions the whole of the golf course and Felixstowe Ferry hamlet would have become flooded (see Figure 3).



Figure 3: Scouring of the sea wall.

In hindsight, at this point in time, (2003), it would have been wise to refer to the Consultants, Royal Haskoning, for further advice. Instead it was decided to order a shipload of rocks and dump them in the area just upstream of the rock groin to fill the gap in the shore caused by the scouring of the eddy currents.

The effects of this was to move the position of the scouring upstream of the new rocks and increase the vertical scouring on the outside edge of the rocks. Consequently the following year further rocks were ordered and delivered to fill the gap caused by the new scouring. Each year since then the scouring has continued and further rocks have been added until the gap between the two concrete walls has been filled. The vertical scouring on the outside of the whole length of this rock defence has continued – the original rocks placed have dropped over 10 feet and more rocks have been placed on them to regain the same height of sea wall.

In the last year (2011) the effect of the eddy

from the flood current at the upstream end of the rocks has caused the alignment of the shore between our bungalow and Martello Tower 'U' to be as it was when this length of concrete wall had just been constructed. Thirty yards of beach has disappeared within six months (See Figure 4 – compare with Figure 1).



a) Looking south



b) Looking north

Figure 4: Beach in 2011

The rocks that have settled over the past seven years may now be sitting on London clay and this could provide an adequate foundation against further settlement. However, it does not mean the erosion downwards will cease. At present the depth adjacent to the rocks at low tide is over 20ft. The way that the currents behave in this area is complicated and depends on the 'wagging tail' of the channel. At present there has been a huge build up of gravel on

the Bawdsey side of the river. The ebb flow bounces off this on to the face of the rocks and then bounces back out to sea. This could change, as it has done countless times in the past, and it is possible (although unlikely) that the gravel will rebuild against the rocks.

The problem of protecting this shore (Felixstowe Ferry) is very specific to the condition of the Deben estuary where the ebb flow of the river is in the opposite direction to the ebb flow out to sea. The prevailing wind strength and direction have a major effect on the course of the channel and build up of sandbanks.

It has not been possible to predict what is going to happen by traditional methods (experience and examining the past). In my opinion in order to establish any reasonable set of predictions it is essential to set up a computer finite element model in which all the necessary data can be input. The model predictions will depend on the development of the model and the quality of the data it includes. It will be complex and the predictions will only become sensible as the model is improved. This will take time and a lot of feedback.

I have been to several public meetings in the Suffolk area in the past three years concerning the defence of our coasts and planning strategies. Apart from what is being done about the Thames Estuary, I have been disappointed by some of the approaches to planning, both in the financing and in the dialogue between the planners and those trying to resolve practical problems. As I understand it the budget for planning (several billions of pounds) is kept quite separate from the cost of actually protecting the coast. This has the drawback of the planning becoming separated from reality. One example of what I consider to be a huge waste of resources was described in a paper given by a senior planning officer. It described the concept of "high value

environment coupled with impacts of environmental risk – ‘cuspsate coast’. This concept allowed the sea to encroach where the risk to humans was least (e.g countryside) and providing sea defences around towns. This would eventually create a coast line with fingers of sea around each town. He did not mention that the length of such a protected coast line would be many times that of keeping the original straight line coast. The mind boggles to think of the numbers of staff and the hundreds of thousand of pounds being spent developing this strategy.

Each part of the coast which is currently subject to erosion is likely to have its own set of unique conditions. Without sophisticated models there is very little hope of providing rational solutions. It is most likely that we will continue to rely on hit and miss methods which is what is currently happening at Felixstowe Ferry.

Robin Whittle

THE COPROLITE INDUSTRY ON THE DEBEN

Coprolites are essentially fossilised dung and are found in our region within the local crag and running in seams beneath it. The name is derived from the Greek words KOPROS (dung) and LITHOS (stone). Coprolites are classified as trace fossils, as opposed to body fossils, as they give evidence for the animal's diet. Most coprolites are composed chiefly of calcium phosphate, along with minor quantities of organic matter.

The first recorded use of Suffolk Red Crag as a fertilizer comes from John Kirby of Wickham Market in his Suffolk Traveller of 1764:-

"In a Farmer's Yard in Levington, close on the left as you enter from Levington into the said Chapel Field of Stratton Hall, was dug the first Crag of Shell that have been found so useful for improving the land in this and other Hundreds in the neighbourhood. For

though it appears from Books of Agriculture, that the like Manure has long since been used in the West of England, it was not used here till this Discovery was casually made by one E d m u n d E d w a r d s , about the year 1718. This Man, b e i n g covering a Field with Muck out of his yard , and wanting a load of two

to finish it, carried some of the Soil that laid near the Muck, tho' it looked to him no better than Sand; but observing the Crop to be best where he laid that, he was from thence encouraged to carry more of it the next year; and the success he had , encouraged others to do the like"

It was not until the mid 19th C. that the industry began to flourish. Mr. W.G.T. Packard, who was Vice Chairman of Fisons Ltd., wrote:-

"In a memoir of my grandfather's life (Edward Packard, senior, as he was known in Ipswich), there is a note to the effect that he was grinding bones for use as fertilizers in 1843, and that very shortly afterwards he obtained some coprolites and ground them in a flour mill, which was leased to him at Snape. About this time, J.B. Lawes invented superphosphate, which was obtained by dissolving the phosphate

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Or in 7lb. tins 2/6 each, and 5lb. tin 1/- each.

We append one of many unsolicited testimonials:—

(copy)
Piper's Steam Mills,
Harlow, Essex,
March 23rd, 1885.

GENTLEMEN,—It gives me great pleasure to send you a testimonial for your Garden Fertilizer. I used it last year in my garden, both for flowers and vegetables, and I can assure you that it gave me very great satisfaction; it seemed to have a magical effect on the crops, and I shall continue to use it this season.

I am, Gentlemen,
Yours truly,
Messrs. Packard and Co.,
Ipswich.

Packard's Advertisement

found within the coprolites, or other phosphatic material, in sulphuric acid. My grandfather soon after, started making superphosphate in Ipswich, where he moved in about 1850, and set up mills for grinding coprolites, which he shipped round the coast to other manufacturers. In about 1857 he started a complete factory at Bramford near Ipswich, including a sulphuric acid works, which was the first complete superphosphate works in the country”.

Phosphatic manures were essential for growing crops, particularly root crops whose large bulbous roots are close to the surface soil. As farmers depended largely on beet, swedes and turnips for winter feed, they felt compelled to search for additional manures to ensure an adequate return. Coprolites could be raised for 8-10 shillings a ton, and sold at 24 shillings a ton. The manufactured phosphate sold at £6-£7 a ton. This was about half the price of the other popular fertilizer of the time, guano (phosphate rich bird droppings).

The industry developed rapidly and extensively, so as to find employment for hundreds of local people. In fact it prospered so much that by 1877, 10,000 tons of coprolite were dispatched annually from the quaysides of the Deben and the Orwell to various parts of the United Kingdom. Veins and pockets were found on most farms in the district, and as much as £20 worth was often dug from a cottager’s garden. Mr. Wainwright of Foxhall, the Woltons of Newbourn, the Wallers and Kerseys of Waldringfield and Sutton, the Johnsons of Boynton all had pits on their farms and continued working them until the early 1890’s. Some of the wealth generated from Coprolite mining was used by Rev. Waller to repair the Church and build the school at Waldringfield. By 1869 Joseph Fison, Noble & Co. and William Colchester were advertising themselves as grinders of coprolite. Edward Packard was well

established at Bramford. Prentice Bros. of Stowmarket ground coprolite in a mill on the Stowupland Road.

The main jobs connected with the industry were digging, sifting, washing, sorting, carting and loading. The younger and stronger men did the digging and loading. Older men, past their prime, had the job of washing. Small boys, often not more than ten, did the sorting for which they were paid about three shillings a week. When strong enough to carry a four stone (25Kg) tin of coprolite they were promoted to sifters and carriers, getting an increase of two shillings in their weekly pay packet. Men could earn then as much as 16 shillings a week in the pits—a good wage in the 1890’s. Men in other jobs were jealous of the coproliters, who had a comparatively high wage and a short-houred day. They started at 8.00am and finished at 4.00pm, with a break of an hour for lunch. But they had to work very hard as everything was paid for by the yard, hod or load.

The opening of a new pit was no small job in the days when everything was done by hand. Shovels and picks were the order of the day and several days were spent digging until they struck a seam. Whilst small pockets were sometimes found near the surface, they usually had to dig down from thirty to forty feet before striking the main seam, which generally lay at the bottom of the crag and on top of the clay. The Foxhall pit is said to have been the deepest in the country, varying from forty to sixty feet.

A coprolite pit was roughly V-shaped in pattern, with shelves from three to six feet wide running along the “ face” side where the extension was taking place. As all work was taken by the yard, everything was measured in that dimension. The men worked in gangs of four, each gang keeping to its own “kench” as the shelf was usually called. A gang was expected to move fourteen loads a day, each load

weighing a quarter of a ton. The boy sifters and carriers helped the men at the bottom of the pit, where they had reached the coprolite. Two boys were allocated to each man, spending all their time sifting and carrying. Taking a four stone tin of coprolite, shoulder high, to the top of the pit was not a bad performance for a boy in his early teens.

Washing Coprolite at the beach



Inexperienced men, when first entering the pits, were kept to the lower “kenches” where they had little fear of falling from the planks when shifting the soil. Planks were laid, supported on “horses”, from one side of the pit to the other, and over these the soil had to be moved in wheelbarrows. As men became accustomed to the work in the pits they were allowed to work on the higher “kenches” where the task was naturally more risky. Wheeling a barrow load of soil on a nine inch plank, over a pit some thirty to fifty feet deep, was no easy task, needing strong arms, a sure foot, and a steady nerve.

As soon as the coprolite was taken on top, washing began. That was an old man’s job when he became too old for the pit. A long tank, some thirty feet in length, was specially provided for the job. The coprolites, along with a certain amount of dirt and bones, were shovelled into sieves which, when full, were placed on a ledge in the tank, just under the surface of the

water; to each sieve was fastened a long pole, which the washer pushed backwards and forwards until the stones were clean. When there was a shortage of water, in or near the pit, the washing was done at the quayside before loading.

After washing, the coprolites etc., were tipped out on the sorting table, where small boys stood alongside ready for action. With a keen eye and deft fingers they picked out anything and everything that would not pass as coprolite with the manure merchants. To avoid cutting their hands on the sharp-edged shells, they used a wooden scraper to push the coprolite from side to side, whilst with their left hands they picked out the refuse and threw it over their shoulders.

Unloading Muck from London on the beach



Having been washed and sorted, the coprolites were then ready for dispatch to the manure factories. Where the pits were situated near the Deben and Orwell, the coprolite was carted to the nearest quayside. Those further inland, such as the Foxhall pits, sent it direct by road to the Ipswich docks, where the manure merchants had their grinding mills.

When loading began at the quayside, all work in the pit had to stop, for every available man and boy was required for the job. It was indeed a busy day, for 100 tons of coprolite had to be moved between morning and night. Boys did the “felling” and men the running. To avoid stoppages,

“two-way” gang planks were laid from beach to barge. The coprolite was shovelled into tins, each weighing one hundredweight (50Kg) when full. And so for all day long, except a short break at noon, the boys were “felling”, while the men were running up and down the gang planks with their wheelbarrows.

Newbourn, Waldringfield and Hemley took full advantage of the barges on the river. In those days barges were always coming and going, bringing in manure from London, taking away and cattle feed, coprolite and cement. The picture shows a barge on Waldringfield beach unloading ‘London’s muck’ hitched to the mooring post which no longer exists. In the nineteenth century there was a mooring post for barges on the beach.

Packards had their own fleet of barges appropriately named Fossil, Ammonite and Nautilus. These will be included in a future article on Waldringfield and the Deben. There is large excavation next to the steps up to the dinghy park which was probably a coprolite pit. We know of several others around the village.

The coprolite industry gradually declined during the late 1880’s and early 1890’s. Coprolite mining may have been ended by the 1893 Quarries Act which required safety precautions for pits deeper than 25 ft. Pits in the Waldringfield area appear to have closed by 1895 and for a year or two afterwards much time was spent in trying to level them out, particularly those that lay in the middle in the middle of a field. Other reasons for the decline and subsequent closure of the local pits were that most of the seams had been worked out. Secondly, deposits of phosphate on a very much larger scale were being opened up in many parts of the world and these could be bought more cheaply. As for the coproliters themselves, having earned good wages, they had little desire to return to agriculture, which was then passing through an acute

depression. Many of the younger and fitter men left to join the army, navy or police. Some of the older men, who had accumulated a little savings, invested their capital in a small business rather than return to the farm work. As for the landowners and tenant farmers, they again settled down to routine agriculture.

Michael Atkinson
Waldringfield History Group

WHO MANAGES THE DEBEN?

THE ROLE OF THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Part II of an Interview with Mike Steen,
formerly Coastal advisor for the
Environment Agency

The interview was carried out in the summer of 2010. In it Mike talks about some of the problems at Felixstowe Ferry, The SMP and Estuarine Strategy, Managed re-alignment, sea level rise and the challenges that face us in the future. (It is an edited version.)

DB: I’m interested in how you managed to fund the work at the ferry. Given what you have spent I would have thought the equation must have been close to one, but it was done as an emergency.

MS: It has all been done in sections as an emergency. If I was to sit here today and say we have managed it as emergency work, then I wouldn’t ask many more questions. We don’t try and not do work. Our ethos is to try and do it if we can, but none the less we have to fund it. Which means we have to work out funding. If we had sat down at the beginning and said we are going have to spend as much money as we have done in one go, doing what has been done, I doubt we would have been able to fund it. So it is because of the way it happened.

DB: As I understand it you still have a problem with the rocks.

MS: The channel is still moving, it is moving towards the land. I probably shouldn't say this but I am really concerned if it keeps moving I don't know how we stop it - short of putting a huge buttress things like steel piles. But that is probably never going to be affordable.

DB: I could see that over topping was a real issue.

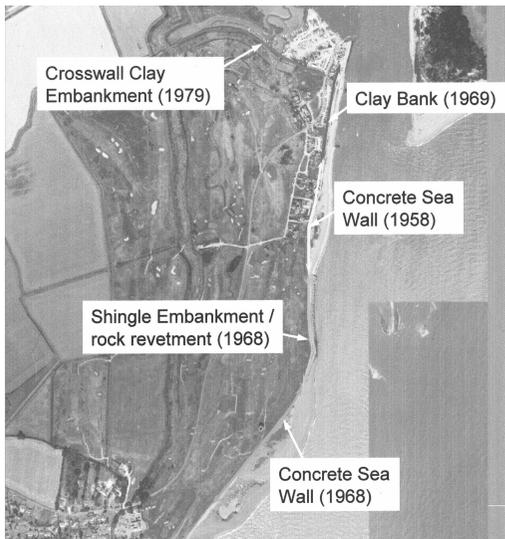
MS: It was worse than overtopping because the bank is nothing but shingle and the sea will go through that like a knife through butter. That is why you need protection. The story there is quite interesting. There is a concrete wall leading from the Ferry to the rocks and there is the concrete wall coming from the Golf Club back down to the Rocks and when they were both built, and I have a colleague who helped build them, so it is still within living memory, there was huge shingle bank there. It probably went out to where the other side of where the channel

is now. In fact I can remember in my working life taking material from it and bringing it down to the Ferry to bolster the beach there. The channel for the river has moved, and it is the movement of the channel that has created all the current difficulties. If the channel went back to where it always has been further to the NE, we would not have any concerns there.

MS: Some people say the Knolls work on cyclic timescale. Frankly, I don't believe that, nature doesn't work that way - it might do in terms of annual migrations and monsoons and that type of thing - it doesn't work that way for shingle bars and estuary rivers. I have talked to John White about this - I don't know the answers. I don't think anybody knows the answers. And the best we can do at the moment is, with the tools that we have, to do the best we can to hold what we have got. We do have some emergency provisions to build a clay bank behind the existing bank if the situation becomes dire but it will be an emergency response, it won't be a total answer. It might be far enough to hold the situation for long enough.

DB: I am conscious that there has been a Shoreline Management Plan but you are saying that is not an Environment Agency plan. Could you explain how this will impact on the Estuarine Strategy for the Deben?

MS: SMP's have been done for all the way round the coast. They are essentially a high level strategy for the whole of the coastline and how we manage the coastline in the short term for the next twenty years and in the medium term for up to 50 years and in the long term up to 100 years. Quite frankly, anything other than the short term. I don't have a crystal ball and I have never met anyone who does - it is guess work; we don't know what government policy is going to be like, we can guess what weather conditions and sea level rise might be like but we don't



Courtesy of the Environment Agency

know, it is guess work. So don't get too hung about those. Look at the short term and you won't go far wrong is my advice to myself.

DB: But that does that mean that the SMP is going to be funded?

MS: The SMP does not guarantee any funding.so the Estuarine Strategy will be the prime document for the Deben.

DB: I know this is difficult but could you summarise from the SMP what are the particular implications for the Deben entrance, for instance what is going to be held?

MS: The conclusions of the SMP and the aspirations, is that a good word for the SMP, because it does not include funding...The aspirations of the SMP are that the mouth of the river should be held where it is on both sides and that is essentially what it says.

DB: Could you say what the Scoping Document is about and broadly the process of the Estuarine Strategy.

MS: We have to produce an SEA (Strategic Environmental Assessment) and the Scoping Document is actually asking local people, local stakeholders whether we have thought of everything we need to include. It is a question to the local community, have we got everything in it that you think ought to be included? The SEA will form part of the strategy and vice versa. ... So if you like there are two processes. One is for the SEA and the other is what we actually do within the estuary

DB: I have been told me there is series of maps.

MS: There is a series of maps showing the banks we have looked at. We call them 'sections'. Yes they are available. We

have been sharing them with interested stakeholders and making sure they are happy. They have been very good actually. They have come back with some queries and, as is inevitable when you use an outside contractor, there are places where it is not quite right. So we are putting those right at the moment. So it has been nice collaboration between local stakeholders and ourselves. To make sure that we all agree that we have got a proper picture of what is exists.

DB So what is going to happen next?

MS: Well we have done the survey work, so we know the height of the defences and therefore what level of protection they offer. We are now looking at what is protected, farm land, and property - any things such as these that come into the equation. That is going on currently. Then we will start bringing the two of those together. And this goes back to the economics we were talking about in this conversation. Once we know how these economics work out we will start talking to local affected people about what we can and can't do. If the bank is uneconomic we can't spend money on it. We are not allowed to - they are our rules of engagement. If it is economic we are allowed to spend the money but we may not be able to get money from the funding stream; so we then start to talk to landowners involved as to how perhaps we could look at it together and perhaps come up with a joint idea of what they would like and what we could do and may be a joint funded scheme or something.

There are other individuals in the area who are looking at more innovative ways of raising money for flood defences. East Lane, is a good example and I think you know a little bit about this already. So it is quite an interesting time because we are looking at things which I had personally not had to look at before. So personally I quite like it because it brings another interest in.

So we are not just saying we can't do anything we are trying to find a way of helping people at every stage.

When we get to places like Woodbridge then I am pretty sure the economics will tell us it is somewhere we can spend some money and we will make sure the defences are as good as we can make them. There is always going to be flood that is bigger than any defence you put in, and it's an important point this. I am an engineer I could build you a defence if you gave me enough money that will protect you from any flood you could possibly conceive but all you would do would be to look at steel piles and concrete all day long. You would lose your views you would hate it. There is a level to be met in all of this.

DB: And you're working with the DEP as I understand it.

MS: Yes I think we are forging quite good links through partnership and vice versa I think it is a two way process.

DB: One thing I would like you to comment on is how you view the debate between managed re-alignment and holding the line. And you have said something about this in terms of creating Special Areas and Areas of Scientific Interest.

MS: The fascinating thing about all this is that there are so many subsections to it all. I think we have already mentioned that this estuary is a Special Protection Area. It is apparently, and there is a debate about this, losing salt marsh and so we have to find a way of recreating enough salt marsh. We are required to; it is a legal duty now, to recreate enough salt marsh to compensate for the salt marsh that is being lost. I think we are the fall guys in this, but never mind. that is not the issue. One way to recreate salt marsh is to find a currently defended area, where if we removed those defences and put in a retired line defence we could open up an area of land to become salt

marsh in the future and thereby create salt marsh and create some of the deficit that is currently happening.

MS: Most of the embankments protecting a river like the Deben are built of clay and they are reasonably good at holding back at high tide until it starts overflowing them. But they are not so good at withstanding wave damage. Now when you have good salting in front of a clay embankment the salting has the effect of reducing the height of the waves, because wave height depends on the depth of the water that they are formed in. And that has the effect of reducing damage to clay embankments. So you very rarely see a damaged clay embankment with a good wide salting in front of it. Where you lose the salting then the clay embankment gets damaged by wave action and by erosion action. . .

The water rushing past it erodes it. Whereas the salt marshes, when they are in good condition, and if they are growing, can actually cope with both the wave action and the erosion. So that is the perspective there.

DB: As I understand it in certain areas of the Deben one of the ways of limiting the impact of sea level rise would be to allow certain areas to flood.

MS: It's like you are providing a wash land. There are several different ways of doing it. Probably the best way of doing it is to put in a sill of a certain height. When the water reaches a certain height instead of it going up stream you start taking a lot of it into your wash land and that reduces the impact up stream. So by sacrificing the Falkenham Marshes you might well reduce the impact on Woodbridge during a very high tide. That's the theory and in practice it appears to work. I think I am right in saying that in 53 an awful lot of the marshes on the Deben flooded and as a result Woodbridge got off comparatively lightly, because the water went on to the marshes and did not go upstream to

Woodbridge. Take that with a pinch of salt until you have actually confirmed it. But I think I am right.

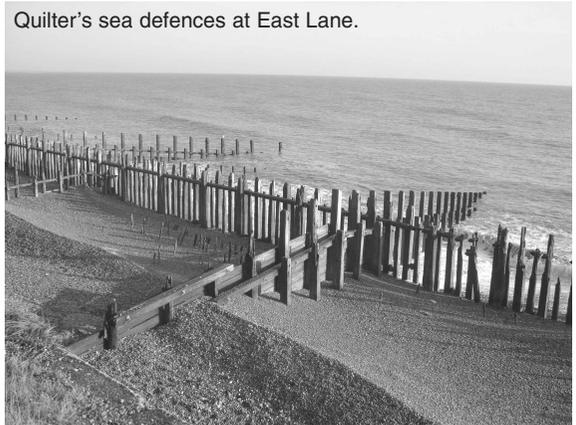
MS: The Estuarine Strategy has gone through several re-births with idealism and that is what we were asked to do by DEFRA. When we started the process we were going to look at the whole estuary as one identity. In other words how the estuary worked with the good of the estuary as the end result; it was an idealistic situation and we started coming up with answers which were becoming unworkable. This is the difficulty with politics and engineering. It takes a year or two to develop these things and during that time the politics have changed so much that what was workable when you started isn't workable when you are reaching some conclusions. Which is quite frustrating at times I have to say -both for us and I think for the people who live here. . . So for the moment, and I can understand how emotive this for landowners, the managed realignment is not a current proposal. Not a current proposal in terms of managing the estuary but quite likely to be a current proposal in terms of re-creating salt marsh on the estuary. So it hasn't gone away but in the estuary I don't think there will be any.

DB: Can I take you to another area which may not be yours, the ICZM, Integrated Coastal Zone Management. (The Alde and Ore Futures)

MS: It is based on the idea that within a given a geographical area there are lots of issues a community is concerned about, be it employment, housing, transport, the environment ... the thinking is that if you start looking at all of them you may come up with solutions that can help, influence, some, a few or all of the community issues. It may be better than perhaps looking at a one sided view. I am a flood defence

engineer, I tend to look at flood defence. I generally don't worry about whether there is a bus service running to the town I am protecting. But it does make some sense in terms of there is not much point in protecting it, if there isn't employment or

Quilter's sea defences at East Lane.



transport links; locally broadband is an issue, you can't get people to set up or stay in an area unless you have good broadband links.

DB: Are there any other issues you think are important?

MS: One or two interesting issues that to me are worth looking at. This isn't a natural environment we are looking at, it is a man made environment - It is artificial. I think the community have to decide if they want to preserve it, as it is, or whether they wish to restore it to a more natural environment. People don't like change - with sea level rise it is factual, not as big as people are thinking it might be. You are wanting to ask me what it is?

DB: Yes, what do you work on?

MS: Factually we work off the tide gauge in Lowestoft, which has been there quite a long time. It is a very good tide gauge and it is accurate. Over the last 50 years there has been a year on year increase in sea level of 1.5 mm a year, not exact every

year but that is what it has been for the last 50 years. But sea level rise has been going on in this part of the world for the best part of 10,000 years, since the last ice age – it is not new. It is why Dunwich is under the water and why there used to be a port here at East Lane and another at Shingle Street. There have been dramatic changes- all the towns on this coast have lost property, land and so on into the sea. Sea level rise has been going on for years. This embankment here that currently protects the marshes was once a spade width high, because that is all that was necessary to keep the bad tides off it, but it has grown. So that is factually what is happening.

The other thing is that this length of coast is sinking and again this is the result of the last ice age. It is going down approximately 1.5 mm a year and so if you add the two together you get an apparent change or an exact change of 3.0mm per year.

DB: So is that what you are working on?

MS: It is what I work on when I talk to you. The government scientists DEFRA want us to work on predictive figures of what might happen for the next 50 years, if we build a defence for today we are not just building it for now, we are building it for 20 to 50 years from now. So we need to know what we need to build to withstand it then; so we are working on higher figures.

DB: I had heard 6 mm per year.

MS: I think it has been reduced a bit for the first 20 years and we are probably working on 4-5 mm per year but that is someone's assessment of what might happen and I currently think 1.5mm plus 1.5mm are good guides just to say it is happening is important because a lot of people don't believe it is happening....

Whether it will happen in terms of what the 'doom merchant' says I don't know. May be

if we come back in 50 years time whoever is right buys the pint. None of us know.

The other point is that as far as I can see the country is broke and the only way forward is or us all to work together...

If we go back not so far, landowners if they wanted to protect their own property built their own embankments. As the nation. Wanted to feed itself and be more secure, it wanted to protect its own food supply so it started to put money into flood defences. Now rightly or wrongly we have stopped doing that, which is why agricultural land is not valued so highly in the process of deciding the assets that can we can bring into the economics.

DB: Equally local land owners like Quilter used their own income. They generated income through the asset, although Quilter was banker as well, to fund flood defences ...It is going to be an interesting debate how we balance up these issues.

MS: Yes, let's look at the moorings. If for some reason this estuary changes, if it was to become a big wide flat river - interestingly when it was a big wide flat river, the Vikings and the Saxons thought it was a wonderful highway. It is unlikely to change that much but suppose it did, I think it would not be the end of everything. It would be a change from what it is today - naturalists, wildlife people, wildfowling, loads of other people would take an interest which they cannot now because of the boating activities, fishermen perhaps. There are always opportunities. Change brings other opportunities it does not necessarily mean the end.

MS: The only other thing I would say is it is not my job, our job, to tell you what is going to happen. All we can do is to look at the ground rules we have, follow those processes, involve you and other interested parties and try to come up with the best solutions we can afford or we can achieve between us. So we are approachable!

DB: Thank you Mike that was very interesting.

(Since this interview with the Estuarine Strategy has been incorporated in the Deben Estuary Plan.)

RUFFY AND THE WALDRINGFIELD CONNECTION

I met with Paul Ruffles known as Ruffy on a summers day in his house near Ipswich. We were in his office which is adorned with the memorabilia of a life at sea with books and pictures of barges and models of yachts and steamers. The walls are lined with charts of India where Ruffy still travels. The wood panelling and rafters are reminiscent of a bargeman's cabin. All that is missing is the iron stove. We had met to talk about his grandfather Robert William Ruffles also known as Bob who was a barge skipper for RW Pauls of Ipswich for over 25 years, and during this time brought barges to Waldringfield as well as further afield.

Bob Ruffles was born at Pin Mill. His father was a Malster and Mariner and the family may have owned the Maltings. Bob was one of eleven siblings. They slept in the loft of a house which still exists opposite the sailing club in Pill Mill, climbing a ladder to their beds. Families like his either worked on the land or they worked at sea transporting the produce of the land.

Bob first went to sea as a 'barge boy' aged nine. Roger Finch notes that *'The master of a small sailing or steam vessel could command a trading vessel which worked anywhere along the coast from Elbe to Brest, the traditional home trade limits, without holding a any Board of Trade certificate. This meant that an exceptional barge boy like 'Bob' Ruffles could, without over much formal education become skipper of the ketch-barge Blanche before*

he was twenty and eventually rise to command R & W Pauls Goldcrest, and then conclude a career at sea as skipper of the Thalatta in his seventies.'

When Pauls sold the Goldcrest and the Conigscrag, a steamship, in 1933, Bob became the master of the Thalatta for the next 25 years 1933-1958 including the Second World War. As R.W. Pauls were also Malsters in Ipswich making malt from Suffolk barley, the barges took it to London to be made into beer.



Thalatta with Bob at the helm

Generally Paul's barges avoided rough trade; for example, carrying rubble from London after the war to build the air fields of East Anglia or 'London mix' - hay to London for the London cab's and manure back east to the farms. Their main trade was carrying malt to London and bringing grain back. Bob did, however, make trips abroad to Belgium and Holland and spoke pigeon Belgian and Dutch. He also sailed to Rouen to bring back stone to rebuild Norwich cathedral.

Ruffy says that *'Bob was a real gentleman, he was not big and yet he was not small, he was tough, and they had to be; but he always wore a collar and tie. When they were sailing they only had things like*

raincoats and a trilby hat, they didn't have Musto offshore gear.

He lived in Grove Lane Ipswich at the end of Foxhall Road.... He used to drink in the Water Lilly, which that was his last watering hole. He used to walk down with a stick, always with a trilby, always with a collar and tie.. a very smart chap.'

Barge racing was a tradition among bargemen. While they sailed in the annual races they also could not resist racing against each other at other times as well. Walter Tye recalls ..

'Should the weather be bad they all assembled at a convenient centre waiting for improved conditions. What a race it was when they all set sail for home waters! Every one of those skippers knew his barge and the route; as well as knowing how to take fullest advantage of every wind and tide, however baffling or treacherous. Of all the spectators at Bawdsey watching those wary and wily skippers fighting it out over the bar none would be more interested than Frank Mason who resided at North Cliff.'

As Ruffy says not only was doing well in the races helpful for trade but it was the equivalent of today's web site for the barge owners and their skippers.

Hervey Benham recounts a conversation with Bob:

'A Harwich race was sailed in 1877, and was won by the Centaur sailed by Jim Stone. I heard the tale of it from that fine old sailor mate Robert Ruffles. At the time of the race he was mate in Mason's Orinoco' (owned by Mason's Cement Company Waldringfield). Orinoco finished third, Grooms Consul finished second. The day before the race they were unloading the Orinoco at Waldringfield and tried to get her 'ends' unloaded first so as to flatten her out into racing trim. But the owners

declined, you don't discharge there and there, you go down into the middle and work your way both ways. So they missed out and were not able to flatten her out. '

'As it was they only got to Harwich on the day of the race at 6.00 am when the race started at 11.00. Each barge was allowed five hands and the course was round the Cork Lightship and the Stone Banks buoy to finish round a steamer in Harwich, a course very similar to today. They carried their punts in the hold and the Centaur, which had been a week on the 'ways' black leading and generally tuning up, had hers slung from the beam so that if she hit the sea the impetus from the swing would help keep her moving.'

'There was a fresh breeze and the Orinoco was handicapped to windward by too big a jib. A tempest (thunderstorm) knocked the heart out of the wind and headed them as they came into the harbour, the Centaur a few minutes ahead. As the ebb was just starting, she scraped round the finish mark, leaving the Orinoco to turn back and forth for three quarters of an hour. In fact, said Bob Ruffles, I don't think we should have got round, only I was forward tending the jib sheets and as we kept making boards up to the steam boat I whispered to him that I heard my skipper say 'If we don't get round next time I am going to sail into him.' So that made them give out more chain and we got round. '

Bob Roberts, who owned the sailing barge Cambria, lived in Pin Mill for 21 years and knew Bob Ruffles well, so well in fact that reference to him appears once at the beginning and again at the end of his book 'A Slice of Suffolk'. In the chapter entitled Old Legends, Songs and a Ghost or Two, Roberts says;

The only other strange tale is of a galloping horse at Freston Cross Roads. The late Miss Annie Powell, when she was eighty, told me: "My brother heard it. He came

home late from Ipswich. Properly shook him. There was these hooves thundering along right close to him and nothing to be seen - nothing." Old Bob Ruffles, the barge skipper who lived to be well over ninety and whose family were the last Malsters at Pin Mill, said: "I walked home that way many a time and I reckoned all this talk about a galloping horse was a lot of old rubbish - till I heard it myself. But I couldn't see no horse."

Ruffy also recalls a story told him by Young Spero who recently passed away in Ipswich. He was Capt. Derek Ling, the son of Spero who was also a barge skipper. "He told me this story about Spero (his father) coming back from London with his son in a barge and Bob Ruffles was also making the same trip when the weather blew up. They both turned into the Colne and rafted up at anchor just off Brightlingsea. Young Spero went off in the barge's boat and came back with a supply of oysters which he had picked from the layings. Bob Ruffles issued a warning and told Spero it was wrong to steal, he should not have taken the oysters and he would report him to the law. He gave him a right rollicking before saying "where's moine (sic) then?"

Four of Bob's five brothers drowned at sea. Bob Ruffles died ashore aged 91 As Bob Roberts says "I knew him as a fine and fearless seaman who climbed the bar post in the Butt (Butt and Oyster pub) on his eighty-fifth birthday."

Ruffy is no mean skipper himself.

'I borrowed Ena (sister ship to Thalatta) for the opening of the new clubhouse at Waldringfield in 1982. Pauls said you can borrow the barge but you must find a skipper. The Ena at that time was skippered by Tom Pollit.'

'No fear, I ain't going to Waldringfield, that's on the Deben. I don't go up the Deben.'

So I said, Oh come on Tom, don't mess about. This is Waldringfield Sailing Club. We've got a new club house and we want to celebrate.'

'I'll only go if I have got a pilot'

'I'll be your pilot. I write the notes on the Deben for Macmillan's and Reid's Nautical Almanac as it is now called. '

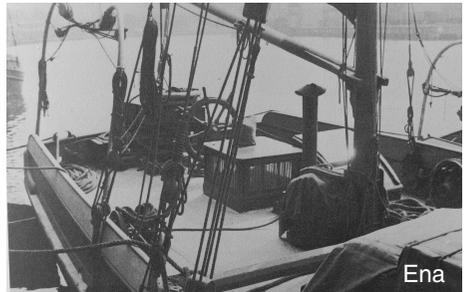
'Oh all right then!'

'The old bugger put me on the wheel in Ipswich dock and I didn't come off till we dropped anchor in Waldringfield. And I was knackered, knackered. That's only 10, 14-18 miles. We sailed all the way. He set the staysail and the mainsail. I persuaded him to put the tops'1 on. When we got out to sea I said 'Can we put the mizzen up?' He replied

'I don't like the mizzen, that makes the wind go right down my neck.'

'So we didn't have the mizzen up...

We sailed up the Deben past the houses at



Bawdsey to Waldringfield. But of course I couldn't turn her at Waldringfield..I had to go past where the old cement works were and up to the Tips, through the moorings and drop the hook. But we had her and it was great fun.'

Ruffy, Master Mariner, still attends the Master Mariners Club at Felixstowe Ferry joined by John Waller - a mate for many

years on barges with Young Spero - who still attends by boat.

David Bucknell

Thanks to Paul and Janie Ruffles

Hervey Benham (1951) 'Down Tops' I Harrup

Roger Finch (1979) 'A Cross in the Topsail' Boydell

Walter Tye, (undated) East Anglian Daily Times. 'Cement making at Waldringfield - When Barges Raced to be first alongside'.

Brief History of the Everson Kingfisher Dinghy.

This 14ft Gunter-rigged sailing dinghy appeared at a time when the Deben Yacht Club was requiring a boat to form a racing class. The Everson brothers Bert and Cyril, happened to hear of a boat (the Norfolk 14ft OD) being used as exactly that, at Wroxham. They acquired from there a set of 'moulds', i.e. the flat boards which define the shape of the stringers, when commencing a planked hull.

Bill told me that they purposely altered the spacing of the moulds when building the first Kingfisher to 'distinguish' it from the Wroxham version. The resulting dinghy, with a metal drop-keel and solid wood rudder, proved very popular amongst helms, men and women, and the Eversons had a very accomplished shipwright who could produce a hull in a week!

My father, who eventually ordered no less



than four Kingfishers over a period of 4 or 5 years, often used to confer at length with this shipwright. He found that the fellow was a strong believer in the Communist Party (this at a time when that belief was locally considered not PC!). He used to say: "I'm looking forward to getting rid of me tools just as soon as I can afford to retire". This was painful sacrilege to my father, who had taken great pains to learn carpentry himself, and admired the fellow's work which far surpassed any that he ever achieved.

The Kingfishers underwent only slight modification in their early years, a metal drop-rudder was a great improvement, and the long slender gaff was made thicker - one of the slender originals with a small modification still forms our washing-line prop, and must be one of the strongest and lightest in Suffolk!



One modification which was never carried out would have been, in my opinion a great improvement; it would have consisted of a triangular canvas foredeck supported on a line from stem head to the mast below the area required by the jib sheets. This would have prevented the bows 'ploughing-in' at sea in heavy weather. It would have saved several incidents requiring the attention of the rescue-boat when racing off the tricky Deben entrance. The Kingfisher did not have very pronounced sheer in her deck line, and that was what initiated the occasional 'ploughing-in' behaviour at sea. Helmsmen (and women) who did not take

BOATS OF THE DEBEN

Enigma

risks and hold their boats hard on the wind, avoided the hazard, and also came out dry winners at the finishing line!



For many years I have looked out over the river to a hull with fine lines lying on the marshes with the Ferry as a backdrop. I had not thought about the story behind this hull until looking through David Green's port folio we came across his drawing of 'The Whale'. After the magazine was published John Palmer wrote to me:

Apart from racing, and the DYC arranged a great deal of that for their Kingfisher class, what with 'evening dinghy', regatta, and 'Bawdsey days', the boats were ideal for picnic expeditions. Their wide stern quarters could provide all the necessary stowage for food and beachwear, all below the long hinged tiller without interference with navigation in any way.

The photo is of the DYC weathercock designed by my mother who sailed her Kingfisher until she was 80.



One young lady, still living in the vicinity, identified this property at an early age. She encouraged a party of friends, 11 in all, with access to 6 Kingfishers, to join in a 'voyage of discovery' to Arthur Ransome's Secret Water – way off Harwich and in past the Pye End buoy – to set up tents on a secret island. The party was a great success, but as far as I know, not repeated.

Peter Uloth

'David Green's drawing 'The Whale 2006' (The Deben 42) was once a very fine yacht. Built as "Alpha Beta" she was named Enigma in 1904. Enigma was designed by Dixon Kemp and built by Alfred Payne and Sons of Southampton in 1881. She was 53 feet long with an 11ft 6 ins beam. 'Enigma was owned by my grandfather E.W.Orvis, shipbuilder at St.Clements Shipyard, Ipswich between the two wars.'

I met with John and we began to piece together some of Enigma's story.

The National Archive has the record of the Board of Trade Official Log Book and Account of Voyages and Crew from 1881 till 1917 when she was acquired by William Orvis, possibly as an unpaid debt. In 1888 her owner was Arthur Carrera in Gibraltar and in 1913 Lionel Mac Mahon in France.

The excerpt I have is for 1896 when she was owned by Miall Green of Lime Street London EC. Her Master was Joseph Bowdell of Brightlingsea. The crew was Samuel Cook and William Steady also of Brightlingsea. They were discharged on 26.11.1896 presumably at the end of the season. Like many professional crew they probably went back to fishing during the winter. 'The yacht was cruising from July 1

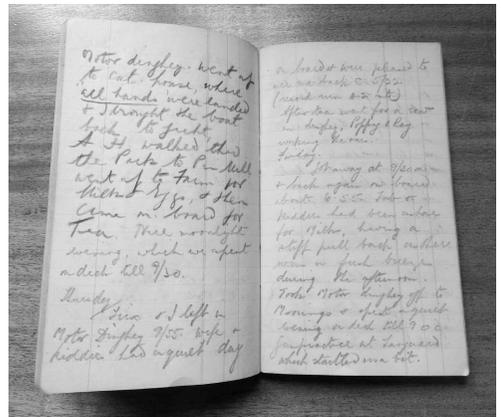


where my Grandparents would spend their weekends in the summer entertaining friends and family. I have their ships logs written at the time. The family home was River View which overlooked the shipyard and looked straight down the river, so they were able to leave their house, step into a launch and proceed down river to Pin Mill.

until November 26 1896 in the English Channel and off the British Coasts - since the last date has been laid up at Brightlingsea and the crew discharged' Interestingly, the record also includes a space to register apprentices on board together with births and deaths 'which have occurred on board during the year.'

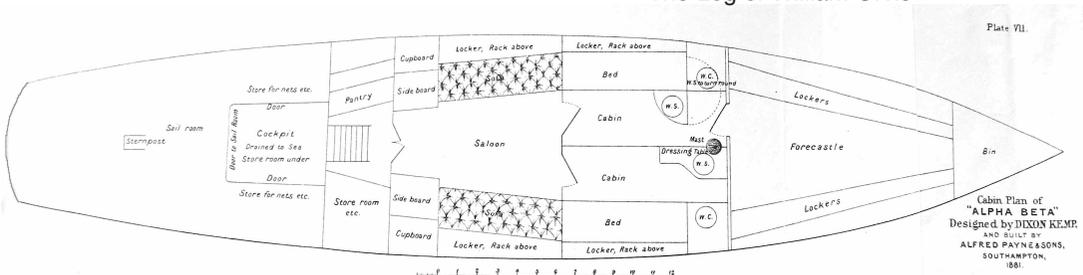
Enigma was on occasion towed round to Waldringfield, while my mother raced her yacht Rainbow with some success, much to the annoyance of some of the the old salts. '

The picture shows Alpha Beta in her hey day sailing in the Solent. (Note the ladies hats.) 'The interior fittings included cut glass door handles and on three of the cabin doors were oil paintings of large yachts which we still have in my family.' The plan shows the layout of Alpha Beta as she was.



William Orvis '...removed the rig and used Enigma as a houseboat moored at Pin Mill

The Log of William Orvis



Enigma in Woodbridge dock with wheelhouse added



We don't know why Orvis removed the rig but before he acquired Enigma he had a barge yacht 'The Sunbeam'. On one trip the fore hatch came off and the boat was flooded. Florence his wife vowed she would never go on Sunbeam again and that my have led to Enigma. It is believed that Enigma's mast was used as up as the flag pole at St Clements Yard.

The logs date from 1917 to 1925 and one in 1937 when Enigma was on the Deben. John has painstakingly typed up the 1917 and the 1937 log and they give a fascinating insight into life during the first world war. The family would spend the summer staying on board Enigma while Orvis would return to Ipswich, often by water, to run the yard. They show another side to Orvis who is remembered as a serious business person but who loved playing with his children and entertaining friends. He was also meticulous about polishing the brass work. The family was always active making trips, swimming, sailing dinghies, racing Rainbow and rowing and using the family motor boat.

Here is an extract from 1917 –

"Friday 15 th – Left yard at 8 o'clock arrived on board 8.50.

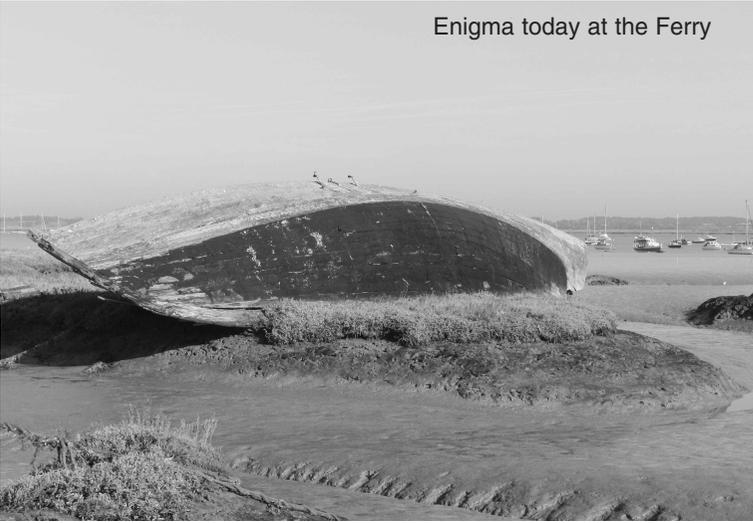
Saturday 16th - Two kiddies and I went ashore and got some asparagus and to phone to speak to May. Sat night woke about 2.50 – thought the breeze of the wind had sprung up and we were chucking at chain but soon realized it was something more serious. Tab and I partly dressed and got out on deck, the firing was terrible and we could see shells bursting in the air over to the right. At last picked up the Zepp and watched her with our glasses for about 15 mins. Saw airman let go his rocket when

firing ceased and a few seconds later saw the Zepp slowly flame and disappear leaving a trail of smoke in the heavens which was visible for 15/20 mins after the fall. Thankful when it was over and to think another raider was 'strafed'."

This is an extract from 1937 when Enigma was moored at Waldringfield.

Saturday July 30th – father, Poppy and Roy left Woodbridge in the launch at 10.45 and arrived aboard Enigma at 11.20 and unloaded stores, then prepared Rainbow for racing. Mother arrived with Teddy and Henry Barber and skipper in the car with more stores at 12.30. Father took launch (Flying Cloud) to gather them up and left Henry aboard Rainbow, which immediately got underway well reefed for Woodbridge to race at 1.30. On way up three people shred the lunch for two. Only one other starter Rohaise so had a good flying start ,had a ding dong down to Cross Reach then Rainbow went ahead increasing her lead slowly down to Waldringfield and still further on the run home, finishing 6 minutes before Rohaise but not enough to save time. Rolled up the jib and Henry sailed us back to Waldringfield for tea on HB. After tea, ashore for stores and water. John Cooper arrived in time for supper, ships company now complete, plenty of talking, turning in on Teddy's command of 'To Bed!', Poppy in the deck house, Roy and John in the fo'c'sle.'

Enigma today at the Ferry



*w h e n
Woodbridge
had been a
garrison town.
She was
recorked and
brought back to
Bass's Dock.
The mahogany
interior was
stripped out
along with all
the cut glass
doors and
locker handles.
Her once
b e a u t i f u l
balustrade stern
was suffering*

During the war Enigma ended up in Woodbridge Dock. Lance Cooper continues the story :-

'My early years were spent on the river at Woodbridge including quite a lot of time playing truant. I recall pumping out Enigma, who lay alongside the Tide Mill as a houseboat for the then owner Commander Challis. She had a large round pump with a curved handle bolted to the deck and on a fairly regular basis I earned 6d. working this device; a futile operation –she did not float or sink, she was permanently on the mud. Commander Challis lived in the wheelhouse that had been added at some time. I recall looking down the saloon skylight to a completely flooded interior with a Seagull outboard on top of the saloon table only just dry. My pumping job started in about 1957 and lasted for several years.

Commander Challis died and Frank Knights bought Enigma with the intention of using her as his houseboat. She was pumped out and floated across the river to the beach under the cliff that had been the shooting range during the Napoleonic War

badly from rot and was sawn off and planked up.

Over several years Frank removed the wheelhouse and made her decks watertight but I think he did not start work on her interior.'

Peter Brooks of the Ferry says that Enigma was bought from Frank Knights by a gentleman from Walton in the late sixties or early seventies. Enigma was to be towed round. However, during the tow down the Deben she veered about wildly, finally breaking the tow at the Ferry and ending up on the mud. The man from Walton lost interest at this point and she was bought by Tony Krailing. He tried to drag her into the 'sluice' but failed. After a particularly high tide she settled on a mud bank with her ends over the mud; this made her very difficult to work on. Later in another gale she fell on to her side damaging her frames.

And there she has remained - fading away but with her history intact - coming to life again as the subject of David Green's picture.

David Bucknell

LETTERS

Ron Everson writes:

Many thanks for the parcel that arrived in this morning's post with three copies of the latest issue of The Deben. We thoroughly enjoyed the read, albeit in my case it had to be with my magnifying glass. My eyesight doesn't improve with age!!!

Congratulations on your article on Aunts Mollie and Ethel. Betty and I both agree that with the limited information you were able to obtain you have given an excellent and true picture of Mollie and Ethel's sojourn in the "Shed", and of my aunts. It brought them vividly back to mind, so much so that I felt I ought to be having a word with them!!

There is just one error which you may consider needs correction. In mentioning the Shingle Street house you say in parentheses that the house was designed by John Penn. This was not so, it was the house / bungalow next door to Bert's that was designed by John Penn. Bert's house was one of the older properties at Shingle Street. It was mentioned because we believed Mollie had the odd disagreement with owner of the next door house!!.....

Further to my email of yesterday, a second read of The Deben has revealed two further errors. The first and minor, is that Grandma Alice had seven children not six, two boys and five girls, the girls Mollie, Ethel, Winnie, Cissie and Fairy who died in infancy. The second concerns the comment about John Penn. John was the bachelor son of Audrey Penn, the water colourist, not her husband. Sorry I did not mention these in previous email but I failed to notice them, Betty did!! Not sure when Audrey Penn died but it must be many years ago now. John died some four or five years ago. Incidentally, John was awarded and MC in WW2.

Best Wishes

Ron

John Palmer writes:

Dear David

Firstly, congratulations on your production of 'The Deben'.

There are two items which caught my eye and may be of interest to you and possibly for inclusion in your next issue.

There is another story in the photograph on page 23 taken in the spring of 1966 of Molly and Bert Everson.

The yacht in the background is 'Hoodwink' which is a Kim Holman designed Twister built for Keith and Jean Bolton. Hoodwink is about to be launched, painted in primer only, in order to be towed up river to Frank Knights' yard and lifted out by crane and loaded on to a trailer to be taken to Keith Bolton's farm. Keith completed the fit out and the internal joinery himself. Hoodwink is often not recognised as a Twister as she has a different lay out of cabin windows. The majority of the Class have three small windows in the cabin side and a perspex fore-hatch, Hoodwink has four windows, with the aft one being larger, a design taken from the Twisters larger sister the 'North Sea 24'.

Hoodwink has spent most of her life on the Deben apart from a brief spell at Pin Mill and has been owned by John and Penny Palmer for the last thirty two years, people still come up to us and say they can remember her being painted bright yellow. Everson's built a sister ship to Hoodwink for John and Jill Young named 'Sniper'. John also completed the fit out and the internal joinery himself. Sniper is currently kept at Pin Mill.



River Deben Association

AUTUMN MEETING
to be held at:

Walton Community Hall
High Street, Walton, Felixstowe IP11 9DS
On Friday 28th October 2011 at 7.30pm

Mr. Gerald Jenkins

will give a talk

“The Mystery of the Tides”

‘A fascinating explanation of the differing times of high tides on the East Anglian and other coasts but beginning and ending in Waldringfield’

The evening also offers
A bookstall
Interval glass of wine
Displays of Deben projects

Photographic competition: bring one Deben-related photo, taken by you.

A4 max affixed to card.

£25 prize for photo with most votes.