



*20 Years of the*

**RIVER DEBEN  
ASSOCIATION**

**Spring 2010  
NEWSLETTER**

**No: 40**

# RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

## March 2010

<b>Chairman</b>	Ed Stanford, 21 Ipswich Road, Woodbridge IP12 4BS 01394 386362 maryedstanford@btinternet.com
<b>Vice Chairman and History</b>	Robert Simper, Plum Tree Hall, Ramsholt, Woodbridge IP12 3AD 01394 411273 robert.simper@creeksidepublishing.co.uk
<b>Treasurer</b>	Chris Brown, 4 June Avenue, Ipswich. IP1 4LT 01473 259674 chriswendy@talktalk.net
<b>Secretary</b>	Wendy Brown, 4 June Avenue, Ipswich. IP1 4LT 01473 259674 chriswendy@talktalk.net
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	David Bucknell, 6 Ferry Road, Bawdsey Quay, Woodbridge, IP12 3AX 07803 612 059 rasmusbuck@aol.com
<b>Felixstowe Ferry</b>	Leigh Belcham 45A Western Avenue, Felixstowe, IP11 9SL 01394 285674 lbelcham1@aol.com
<b>Rowing</b>	Paul Lacey, 4 The Granary, Tidemill Way, Woodbridge IP12 1BY 01394 386481 paullacey99@yahoo.com
<b>Wildfowlers</b>	Adrian Judge, 29 Bredfield Street, Woodbridge IP12 4NH 01394 383350 adrianjudge@keme.co.uk
	Denzil Cowdry, The Mews House, 105 New Street, Woodbridge. IP12 1DZ 01394 383625 faycowdry@hotmail.com
	Simon Read, Barge Jacoba, Robertson's Boat Yard, Lime Kiln Quay, Woodbridge IP12 1BD 01394 384060 jacoba@simonread.demon.co.uk
	Anne Moore, 2 Grundisburgh Road, Woodbridge IP12 4HG 01394 383559
	Neil Winship, Sandcliff, School Road, Waldringfield, Woodbridge IP12 4QR 01473 736423 neil@alpheco.co.uk
	Peter Clay, (Associate member) 83 Ipswich Road, Woodbridge IP 01394384374 pete@peterhenryclay.co.uk

## EDITORIAL

For many years the Newsletter dropped through my door. I read it, enjoyed it and thought 'There are some good people protecting the interests of the River Deben. I can leave it to them.' Then I saw Ed's appeal for an Editor and thought now is the time to make a contribution - so here goes!



Anyone who has been involved with an association like the RDA will appreciate what has been achieved over the 20 years. The RDA has a large, subscription based, membership, a Newsletter in its 40th edition and a website. The RDA has been involved in many campaigns and has lobbied effectively over the years. This has mainly been the work of a small group of active committee members, and in particular past and present Chairman; some of whom have once again contributed to this Newsletter.

We are entering a period in which fresh challenges will mean that the role of the RDA is as important as it has been over the last 20 years. Since the war we have not had to face major external threats. The catastrophe of the 1953 floods is etched on the memories of those who endured them. We have grown accustomed to being in 'control' of everything or at least the illusion of control. However, we are beginning

to realise that there are natural processes that we do not fully understand and cannot control. Some of the cycles we are dealing with occur over a hundred or more years. We tend to look at issues in the present without the historical context - a 'pinprick' in time.

How we respond to the current threat of global warming, coastal and river bank erosion, pressures on the river resulting from new housing development in the area, is going to be very important. There will be infinite points of view and vested interests and these will be the content of the debate about the future of the River Deben. It will be important to learn more about the issues and their dynamics and to understand the problems and difficulties faced by the agencies who represent us. At the same time we should hold them to account. We need a dialogue that progresses beyond jargon and buzzwords and moves from positional statements to a consensus. We need debate and discussion and the RDA can play an important role in this process.

The Deben Estuary Partnership (DEP) has been set up to consider and act on some of these issues. It is in recognition of the RDA as a source of knowledge and sound advice that it has two representatives on the DEP. However, in order to maintain this status the RDA needs to strive to reflect the views of you the members,

who care about the river but do not have a statutory role. The RDA Newsletter can be a vehicle for reflecting your views together with debate and discussion. As Leigh Belcham has said we hope to develop communication through email and the website with the aim of making the RDA more 'interactive' with the membership.

In this edition of the Newsletter Ed and Leigh take us into the next period of the RDA and Denzil Cowdry looks back over his time as Chairman and gives us his thoughts on future issues. Simon Read's article highlights some of the issues that underpin the debate around coastal defence. Robert Simper provides a reference guide to the walls of the Deben and their historical importance. John White's piece about Ellen continues the series on Boats of the Deben and connects us with the craft skills and traditions of those whose livelihoods depended on the river and whose knowledge is so relevant today. News from the Hard updates us on some recent developments and we have a light hearted look at litter picking in the Caribbean continuing the traditions of the RDA worldwide.

As in previous Newsletters the contributions cover a range of topics, interests and styles. They help us to explore the many facets of the river and thus enrich our understanding and enjoyment of the River Deben.

But an Editor without copy is'...up the Deben without a paddle.' So I hope you will not wait ten years, as I did, to become an active contributor.

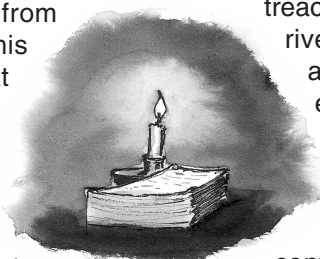
*David Bucknell*

*David Bucknell first sailed to the Deben from Kent in 1994 when he was told by Ron 'It isn't all mud up there, there are some golden sandy beaches.' Since then he has spent most of his time in the Airman's Married Quarters at Bawdsey Quay enjoying the Deben. He was formally a university lecturer and is involved in the conservation of a harbour in Cornwall. He swims, sails walks, rows, kayaks and motors on the Deben and keeps it up throughout the year (not the swimming – hopefully!)*



## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

You will see from elsewhere in this newsletter that volunteers have come forward to take over from me: Leigh Belsham as Chairman and David Bucknell as Editor of the Newsletter. I am very grateful to both of them and I am sure that the RDA will be in good hands over the next few years. Assuming that their appointments are approved at the AGM in April I shall formally resign as Chairman although I will still remain on the Committee. You may feel that we have gone through a relatively quiet period, for instance there was no Maritime Woodbridge this year, but a lot of work has been going on preparing for the future. The Deben Estuary Partnership has held numerous committee and working party meetings and has had meetings with representatives from Suffolk Coastal, the Environment Agency, and Natural England. For better or worse (usually the latter) the task of repairing the river walls has become less simple than I thought. Any work may require a Planning Consent, an Environmental Impact Assessment, Land Drainage Consent, or a Flood Risk Assessment. All these take time and require forms to be filled in and appropriate fees paid. In some cases external consultants may be required for an EIA or an FRA. We should all be very grateful to the various landowners for their willingness to



wade through this bureaucratic treacle. I have concerns beyond the river banks, in particular the appearance of the riverside especially the Woodbridge riverside. One of the sights of Suffolk is that of Woodbridge from Sutton Hoo. At the moment Whisstocks is a continuing eyesore and the Trustees of the Tide Mill are facing their own bureaucratic treacle. Fred Reynolds of the Trustees tells me that even with the most favourable progress through the National Lottery application process it is highly unlikely that any restoration work could begin until June 2011. In the meantime the Mill continues to deteriorate as evidenced by the water wheel coming off its axle quite recently.

If you are interested in the position go to the internet [www.woodbridgetidemill.org.uk](http://www.woodbridgetidemill.org.uk).

The Tide Mill is part of the most attractive view of Woodbridge as I've said but there are other challenges. Members may have seen the steel work going up for the new rowing club premises. At the risk of annoying some members I'll have to say that the industrial type building being erected may be just what the club requires but it cannot be said to enhance the quality of the riverside. I understand that there has been discussion about the rebuilding of Eversons. No doubt this is long overdue since the existing buildings are neither waterproof nor draught proof; but it would be nice to learn that any new building would enhance the riverside.

These sorts of issues will, I hope. involve many members of the RDA more closely. One of Leigh Belsham's plans is to record the e-mail addresses of as many members as possible so that when planning issues arise we can canvass your views and then submit a more broadly based representation. I can't emphasise enough that planning matters should not be left to the committee for a response, after all the strength of the RDA is to be found in its 800 plus membership. My remarks about Woodbridge apply equally to Waldringfield, to the Ferry and anywhere else on the river.

On an entirely different subject some members attended our half yearly meeting at the Ferry in October 2006 at which our speaker was Prof. Tim O'Riordan of the UEA. At the time he gave us the generally accepted line on climate change, rising sea levels, coastal erosion and so on. At the end of the meeting I was chatting to him and asked what weight he and his colleagues gave to the influence of geological time citing in particular the mini ice age in the 16th century. Totally irrelevant' he said and walked away. Would I get the same answer now? In conclusion it is fair to say that the RDA is in good shape. Our role in relation to the river is clear. We can work with the

DEP (but do things which they cannot) and we have a sufficient cushion of funds to enable us to undertake small studies or works. As I've said before (and will undoubtedly say again!) the Sutton Shore Project shows what can be done with limited funds and a strong commitment. This commitment is demonstrated not just by paying your RDA subscription but by expressing your opinion on all and any proposal which affects the river. I have enjoyed my time as Chairman and am confident about what the RDA can achieve. Thank you both to the Committee and to the membership at large for your support over the last five years.

*Ed Stanford*

### **Editor's Notes:**

The DEP currently has three Working Groups –

- The Saltmarsh Group – looking at the management of saltmarsh and future areas for protection.
- Landowners Group – currently assessing the value of protected land.
- Data Group – assessing quality and height of defences.

Contact: Ed or Simon



## LOOKING AHEAD

Leigh Belcham, standing as RDA Chairman for the next three years, is excited by the opportunities.



My first contribution to this magazine, entitled something like 'Surviving the Fifties', was a nostalgic portrayal of idyllic teenage years at Waldringfield in Dragonflies, Cadets and Fireflies.

I had written the article a year before moving back to the area in 2002 with my wife, Jill, after an absence of well over 40 years. Much had changed but the Deben was still recognisable, and memories of long-forgotten people and events came flooding back. More than once, Jill had to take me to task for boring our friends with too much harking back to the good old days!

Now, with the possibility of becoming the association's Chairman, I want to assure members that nostalgia, for me at least, is no longer what it used

to be! Seven years as Secretary to the Felixstowe Ferry Forum, and five years as its representative on the RDA Committee, have ensured that current concerns and future needs have dominated my thinking for some time. Recent excursions up river in our elderly Wayfarer and latterly our equally elderly Pandora, have left me in no doubt that increased silting, eroding saltmarsh, degraded river walls and speeding powerboats are all issues that cannot be ignored.

The stated aim of the RDA is *"to represent and reconcile the interests of all concerned with the future of the River Deben and its environs"* (my italics). Our memories may well fuel our motivation in caring for the river we love, but it is today's realities and tomorrow's needs that must inform our policies and actions.

Nostalgia has certainly not hampered the work of our retiring Chairman, Ed Stanford, and it is in no small measure due to his influence that the association is taken seriously in high places. During his five years leading the association, he has tirelessly represented us to such bodies as the District and County Councils, Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB, the Environment Agency and Natural England, and has been a voice for the association whenever planning applications affecting the river have been considered.

Over the past 12 months, together with Simon Read and Robert Simper, Ed has been a major influence in establishing the new Deben Estuary

Partnership, through which significant progress is already being made in repairing river walls and restoring lost saltmarsh. Relieved that Ed is willing to continue representing us on the DEP, we owe him our appreciation and gratitude, and acknowledge that his will be a very hard act follow.

Following a SWOT analysis a few months ago (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats in normal English!), the RDA Committee believes that several specific and potentially exciting steps need to be considered if the association is to continue to fulfil its aim. These can be looked at in more detail at the AGM on 22nd April but suffice it to say now that they include

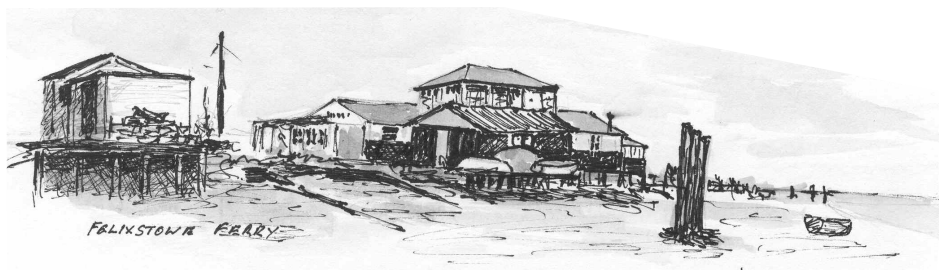
- broadening the age range of the membership and the number of bodies represented;
- improving communication with members and from members, especially electronically;
- developing a Forum through which members' concerns can be identified more easily;
- acting upon those concerns by representing them to other bodies; or

- initiating projects to address them directly;
- updating the association's image; and
- promoting the association more widely.

With a background in both local authority - and church-based youth and community work, the management of residential holiday and adventure activity centres, and of two not-for-profit national Christian organisations, I should welcome the opportunity now to work with the Committee in guiding the association through what could be an important and exciting stage of its development. But to do so successfully, each of us will need your presence, active participation and support, not only at the AGM but throughout the coming months.

*Leigh Belcham*

Membership. The Secretary Wendy Brown, is updating the RDA membership list. If your details have changed please will you contact her. We would like to be able to contact you on occasions via email, and it would be helpful if you would also forward your email address.



## LOOKING BACK: LOOKING FORWARD.

Twenty years is a good life for a lobby group. As a member and twice Chairman during that period I have good authority to make considerations. The overcrowding issue first came to my attention on a Summer's day when I was searching for my dinghy at Waldringfield, to get out to a Squib for an imminent race. Rosemary Schlee wanted £2 for the Deben Association, evidently wanting to talk; mainly to rid myself of delay I paid up immediately. Rosemary was a strong character, absolutely determined once settled on a course. Thus, with others, the Association was formed. Ian Batty was at the start line, together with Anni Healey, Anthony Mason, Anne Moore and Mike Atkins.

The root problem was that more people and more activities were taking place on the river...it was getting crowded. Dinghy sailing was booming and there were more and more, ever bigger, plastic yachts! Would the old environment be spoiled, could

expansion continue, and even, who were all these people? Social change was reaching East Anglia. Could the old order be maintained? While not spoken or written down, these were the attitudes that were driving some members. Happily, sensible Terms of Reference were written, still in use today. Our aim was to keep the peace, giving everybody a chance. There was much talk about access, the limitations being the main reason for not being overrun.

The Association thrives when causes crop up. One of the first was a proposed Marina at Felixstowe. This was against the local grain at the time and was eventually stymied by the purchase of the foreshore, to which RDA contributed. We are still part owners. With this first success the role of the Association was established.

The knock on my front door came about six years later. At that time I had rather forgotten about my membership and was surprised to find that it was Anthony, looking for a



KYSON POINT.

Chairman. He had a good Committee but the Chair was proving difficult to fill. I needed an excuse to resist a less congenial voluntary appointment and, hey presto, I agreed to serve.

Eventually I did two tours of duty. The first was made interesting by a proposal to turn Bentwaters into an international airport with the outbound flight path down the Deben. The turning point was above my house on Ipswich Road! We had by that time established ourselves as a responsible lot and the Council Committees took account of our views. Members and money came in quite freely. Frank Knights found £250 from a previous fund which he had administered to prevent French fishermen from setting up oyster beds on our river. The outcome was no, and the concrete from the longest runway in Europe went to building sites.

Anthony intervened in the Chair and then it was my turn again. Within weeks we were engaged in a battle to prevent Whistocks site from becoming a large housing development, dwarfing the Tide Mill. Great views to the front of course but no access along the river for people. That appeal against local decision also went to a Public Enquiry and was thrown out. This site is still in debate and is under careful watch.

The present Chairman, Ed Stanford, has for five years worked to establish

policies to counter the damage being done and foreseen by ever increasing tide levels. Proactively, with financial help from Suffolk Coast and Heaths and muscular help from Simon Read, he governed the building of a structure on the Sutton shore which is preventing the washing away of marsh by strong ebb flows. An interesting wall with holes could provide the method for saving threatened marsh anywhere.

Leigh Belcham is the next occupant of the Chair. What will he and others that follow have to face? The plan to build 2,000 houses at the BT site will bring a flood of potential river users, walkers and dogs. If we really believe in conservation then dogs should be on a lead on the sea walls. I can affirm with total conviction that the salt marsh that I knew thirty years ago in the top half of the river is slowly being drowned. First the reeds decline, then gaps enlarge and the mud increases. Where the river banks were breached in earlier times there has been no sign at all of marsh regeneration, just more mud. We are suffering long term change. Only investment of enormous effort, similar to the coastal work undertaken in Holland, can counter this force. Minor work can provide a little help and much opportunity for conversation! Nature is one enemy and man quite another. I see the main problem for man as being a matter of education. This is something we can manage. The Association is large enough to have

influence in schools and with parents. Unless the Committee are diverted by a new pressing engagement, then it is only a question of making a start. They have my very best wishes in their effort to preserve a rather special place.

*Denzil Cowdry*

### **News from the Hard.....**

Walking to the top end of the tidal river on 1st March, "each moment sweeter than the one before", it was not just the weather change that filled my mind. Every scrap of space in the Marina and the yards was full of boats, most of them covered and well kept, with not a sniff of recession anywhere. How lucky we are in this corner of the land. I popped inside the Marina and looking at all the boats and the newish Headquarter building, all shining in the Spring sun, reflected briefly on the slow but deliberate growth of this great asset. Further along the river path I could see work being done to the wet berths in the upriver extension, evidently filling up as they are completed.

Robertson's yard never disappoints for interesting unusual work. Two very large lee boards were being cut out. Not many places in the whole country who would tackle this sort of work so confidently. I asked about Oliver Hicks, the young rower for whom Robertsons had finalised the boat with which he planned to round the

world in the Southern Ocean. New Zealand to New Zealand. Well, most will know that he failed because in heavy weather the 20 foot boat went sideways! I learned that his will to accomplish this endeavour is not diminished and based on his 80 day experience he is thinking in terms of a larger multi crewed attempt.

Nice that they all come home. One of the far flung boats from Waldringfield is, I understand, leaving Sardinia for a southern French port in the summer to come home by road. That will not be possible for Anthony and Celia Mason, currently in Falmouth, Antigua and thoroughly enjoying the second spell of their long escape. Celia has a great blog: try Voyageoftomia on Google. Recently Celia did some self examination "The oddest thing about coming back here is that it feels so known, not something that exists only as a day dream or a two week holiday cut off from real life." They have great fun.

At the very top of our river Mel Skeet's yard was very tidy and very full. We talked about changes to the river (the word mud is banned) and he confirmed that the depth of the channel is the same as it was 30 years ago when he started, but deposition has increased at the sides. Also, the banks on the far side, previously enclosing a field, were gradually disappearing. He would like to extend his hardstanding and has all the permissions to do so except

the Council who hang on to the idea that the few yards involved would be better left wild. Do I see a discussion pending with Association involvement?

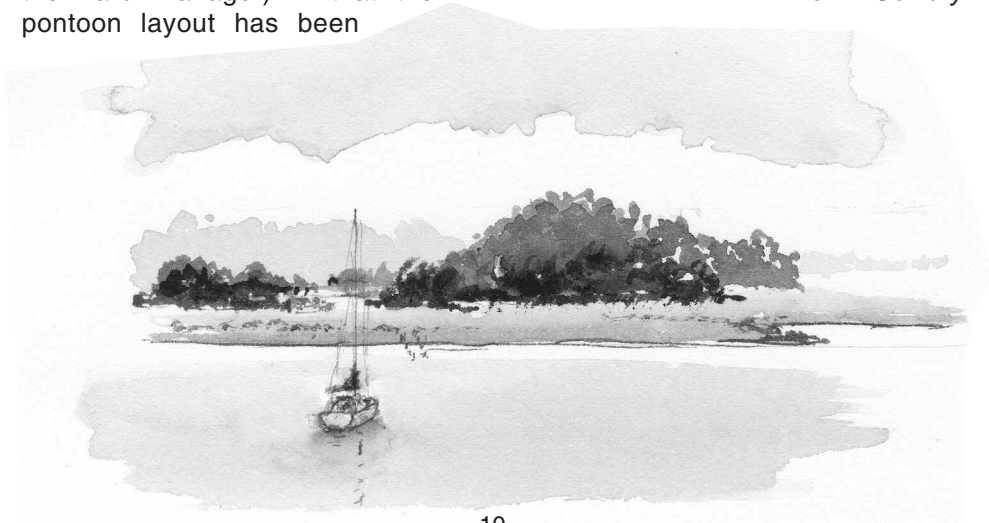
My final call was to Larkmans. Again a full yard but without significant change in numbers of boats from earlier years. The biggest change, new to me, was the very clever adaptation of two containers to house the office and chandlery shop. Double doors at the front, lining, a broad staircase, and a grand window at the front so that Dawn can keep her eye on things, in comfort too. Clever chaps the Larkmans, perhaps with too little time to devote to their own summer sailing. Again, how lucky we are to have such competent advisers.

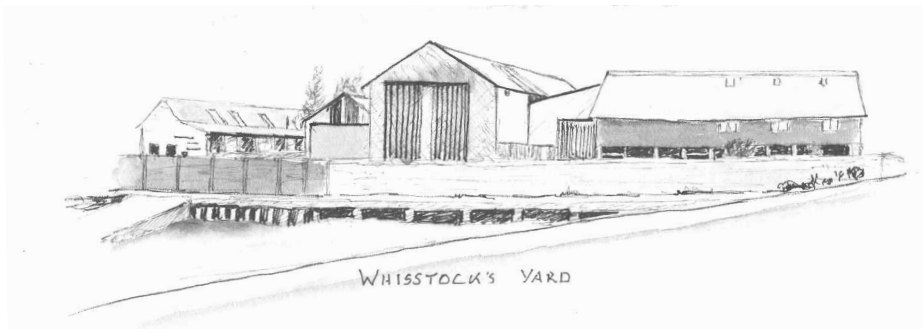
Woodbridge has been the centre of a lot of hard work this winter. At Eversons the progress has been "steady but not spectacular" (words of the Yard Manager) in that the pontoon layout has been

improved with better access from the shore. However, on both sides of Everson's delightful main building the word spectacular can be applied. The Rowing Club shed has gone and is being replaced by a modern building on a steel frame, certainly long enough for boat storage but also to provide facilities attaching to the main drain. On the other side The Deben Yacht Club has been given a wider front deck and the pontoons have been made independent in that they travel up and down with the tide on their own legs and connect to the Club by a new broad passage. The old building no longer takes the weight, but retains its character.

Talking of work, Moray MacPhail of Classic Marine says that things are going well at Martlesham Heath Industrial Park where he has installed more machinery and can make most traditional yacht fittings to any size. He is even recruiting.

*Denzil Cowdry*





## **WHISSTOCK'S BOATYARD and the Woodbridge Riverside Trust.**

There has been little noticeable progress in the fortunes of the empty Whisstock's boatyard over many years. During Heritage Open Days in September the whole site comes to life like the Australian desert after rain- teeming with life and activity for a couple of days before lapsing back into semi dereliction. The formation of the Woodbridge Riverside Trust sprang from the concern about the potential loss of riverside sites on the Deben- and of immediate importance the Whisstock's site.

The aim of the Trust is to buy the site and so secure its future. The planned use for the site derives from the research that WAMRAG did on the subject showing a strong public wish for the site to retain a maritime usage. The Trust would like to create a community facility on the site and is exploring the many possibilities for traditional marine training skills, developing it in time into a "centre of excellence". The Trust is delighted to

have the International Boatbuilding Training College in Lowestoft working as an active partner in the project and their presence in Woodbridge would be a significant asset.

During the development of these ideas the Trust has involved many interested parties and received unequivocal and widespread support for the project not only from individuals but also from the following:-

Suffolk Coastal District Council  
 The Haven Gateway Partnership  
 Woodbridge Town Council  
 Woodbridge Town Trust  
 Woodbridge & Melton Riverside  
 Action Group  
 Woodbridge Town Centre  
 Management Ltd  
 The Tide Mill Trust  
 Sutton Hoo  
 Suffolk Coast and Heaths  
 River Deben Association  
 Deben Yacht Club  
 Woodbridge Rowing Club  
 Budgens Store Woodbridge.

There is much work and negotiation yet to be done before a full picture of the project can be presented. The Trust welcomes support and interest in the project and of course includes the RDA members in that welcome.

**Contact:** The Woodbridge Riverside Trust, Sun Wharf, Deben Road, Woodbridge, IP12 1AZ - or the  
**Trustees:** **Pete Clay-**  
pete@peterhenryclay.co.uk,  
**John Gibbins-** johng@gibbins.co.uk,  
**Martin Wenyon-**  
martinwenyon@hotmail.com.

## Waldringfield

The Deben was sparkling at sunrise today when I remarked to the photographer that it would be even more enchanting if the mooring buoys could also be removed over winter. Surprisingly he felt they add a touch of colour and interest. Symmetry and order appeal to me as a former soldier so I wondered if they could be positioned more precisely along smooth curves, but then I am not paying or standing for election!

But seriously our Fairway Committee face real difficulties balancing the interests of bird-watchers, walkers, dinghy racers, 'yachties' and lawful navigators. Jason might well be reciting:

"I must go down to the sea again, to the lonely sea ..." but heck! There's a fleet of cadets closing on my port

bow; they merit encouragement but do they know the rules for the avoidance of collisions? Hard a starboard and Argo should just weather Nautilus moored over there but then we must tack real quick or we shall be aground and there is so little wind that with this ebb tide it is going to be touch and go squeezing between the Sirens and Whirlpool. Besides does that motor cruiser know that Argo is under sail so has right of way? Jeremy Clarkson would have long since resorted to a beastly, noisy, polluting 'donker'; but what about those 'twitchers' in the saltings and the walkers on the sea wall photographing the serenity of an old gaffer under sail?"

Waldringfield Sailing Club recently presented an open meeting of the Parish with its revised proposal for a pontoon just upriver from the dinghy park's hards. The pros and cons were thoroughly aired in forthright but well mannered style by protagonists for and against. Space precludes any résumé here, besides Waldringfield Fairway Committee, the Parish and District Councils, RDA and no doubt others are still to discuss the proposal. If SCDC, under orders from Government, approves BT's proposal for a new town between Adastral Park and Waldringfield Heath, we must expect more pressure on Waldringfield beach in front of the Club. Global warming may well excite more swimmers and paddlers with every right to enjoy the Deben.

Personally, I suggest no one should add to climate change by investing energy and CO2 on nice-to-have but inessential artefacts made of metal or concrete or burning fossil fuel for their leisure. Even if we can afford the money, that does not justify that utterly selfish 'Because you're worth it!'

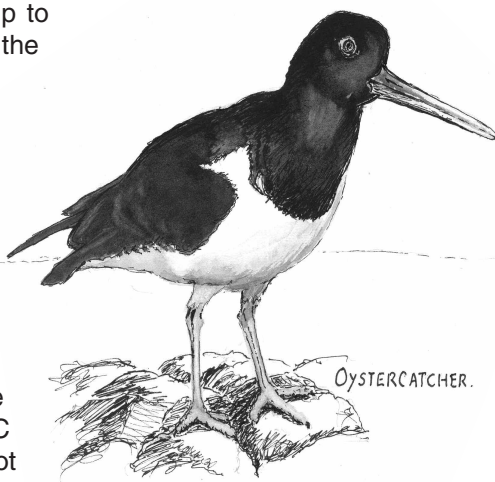
Neil Winship

*PS. Waldringfield Fairways Committee has a new secretary Paul Beaumont, Deben Cottage, Cliff Road Waldringfield IP12 4QL*

been subject to the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 and the 'collision regulations'. Moves are a foot to bring these craft under the Act, and thereby subject to enforcement by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. This will help those seeking to control speeding and dangerous activity. However, it seems that the forthcoming election means that the amendment order is not likely to come into force until later in the year. The group is also looking at ways of tackling speeding powerboats in the river. The group would welcome your views. Contact: Leigh Belcham

## Felixstowe Ferry

The Felixstowe Safer Neighbourhood Team has set up a working group to consider issues of speeding on the river, particularly at the Ferry. The group includes representatives from Felixstowe Ferry Forum, Suffolk Coastal District Council and the Police. There are particular problems at the Ferry in the summer when the water is congested and there is considerable risk of an accident. Attempts nationally to control the misuse of jet-skis or PWC (Personal Water Craft) have not been helped by the fact that jet-skis have not been classed in law as 'ships' and consequently have not



## Between a Rock and a Soft Place

Seen from above, our river is totally captivating; more so for us because we know it and because the unaccustomed view allows us to see it afresh. At Felixstowe Ferry it is possible to see the transparency of land and the ephemeral character of the activities we have imposed upon it. Beneath the surface is a clear shadow-land; the intestinal wriggle of ancient watercourses that once drained the huge Kings Fleet Marsh are at present no more than a trace, but in the fullness of time, might reassert themselves long after golf has become a vague memory. We can see the great meanders of the river as it describes its course, restrained here and there by the hard

lines of human control. At the entrance, one sweeping curve that should chase itself on to the golf course is constrained by a filigree of stone that belies the brutality of the structure at eye level.

Google Earth is a tremendous tool and a boon to the imagination, but it cannot prepare you for the time that you must navigate that entrance on a flooding tide set in by a strong North-Easterly wind. Then those rocks are intimidating and unpleasantly close, it is with a sigh of relief that you straighten up for the run parallel to the beach.

It seems a long time ago that “Rock Armour” entered the vocabulary of sea defence to become, as it is now, the preferred material where there is a need for resilience. It may have the same mass as concrete, but it is



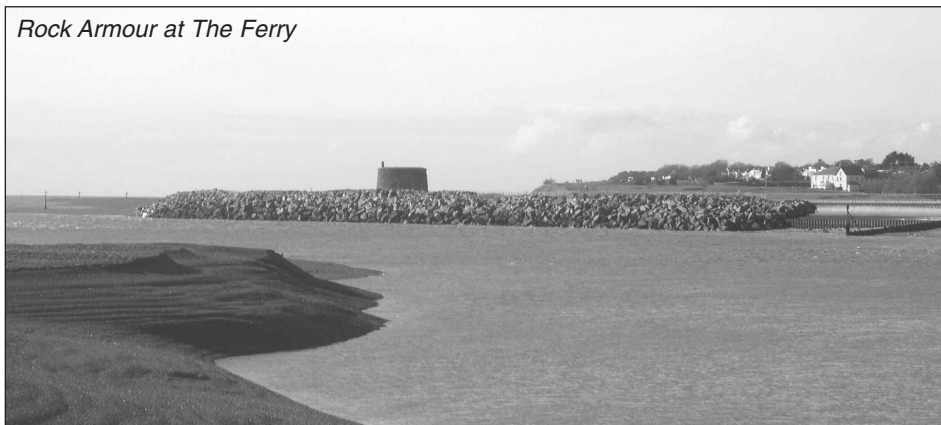
generally not a self-supporting structure and therefore can be only as permanent as what it is stacked upon and against. Although it can be placed with extreme precision, it can also be picked up and taken away again. It is a material in tune with the uncertainty that bedevils our grasp of coastal processes.

On our coasts and estuaries, what used to be called defence is now shoreline management and flood risk management, the key to both is the term “sustainability”. We know that Defra (1) does not have the available cash to maintain our defence systems in their present configuration and we could substitute the word “affordable” for sustainable. “Sustainability” is a catchword in contemporary culture; its usage comes with a heavy dose of ‘realism’ and represents an unwillingness to continue devoting resources to structures and strategies that do not work with natural processes. It is the antithesis of idealism; based upon common sense,

it is difficult to get fired up by it, especially when it proves impossible to apply uniformly. By the time we have listed all of those sites on our rivers and coast that it would be foolish to leave to their own devices, such as towns, villages and a nuclear power station, there is precious little that we have left to be ‘sustainable’ with. The Shoreline Management Plan for the Suffolk Coast has just been published. (2) It may be a carefully considered document but once all the priorities for protection (or hold the line) have been established, there is such little scope for a sediment supply to stabilise the beaches that something has to give. So goodbye Covehithe! Although (or because) this is a pragmatic decision, the result of a dispassionate analysis of coastal processes, and part of a national programme, it appears iniquitous and will certainly be unacceptable to the people of Covehithe.

The response to the catastrophic

*Rock Armour at The Ferry*



floods of 1953 was that this must never be allowed to happen again. The mantra then was defence of the realm, a residual echo of the psychology of a nation at war, applied to a new battle against natural forces. Our coasts, especially those facing mainland Europe, were already armoured, but with a different antagonist in mind. Consequently, it is not a big leap to see that the hugely advanced know-how in concrete technology and a highly developed civil engineering infrastructure could be re-deployed in the event of a national emergency, be it military or natural. Whilst the disadvantages of this approach are now becoming clear and things have changed philosophically, this has not filtered down to coastal communities who expect, as a right, consistent standards of protection and that this should be a duty of central government. Consequently, the indiscriminate application of that “sustainability” word has come as a shock and left behind it a huge sense of betrayal.

Meanwhile, back on our river, the rock that was put in place to prevent the clay wall at Felixstowe Ferry from breaching is beginning to slide into the channel. This has swung so far south that it has eroded away the beach that the rock was stacked upon leaving a steep drop that affords no traction to this kind of

defence. A fundamental flaw of rock armour is that it might appear resilient, but if either the beach is lost or groundwater softens the structure behind it, it will collapse. The up side of this is that it is reversible; it can be dismantled and it is possible to think again. From above, it is evident that the defended wall is an awkward bulge into the channel. Ultimately there might be little alternative but to remove the rock altogether, build a bund on the golf course as a backstop and let the river do the rest. This is an aspect of ‘adaptation’ (another of those words), which is when you understand that what you would like to protect is not within practical or affordable limits that you must bow to the inevitable and seek ways to absorb the impact.

Because we are culturally tuned to measuring misfortune financially, where the decision not to maintain defence is made as a local application of a national strategy, culpability becomes an issue and

*Old and New at East Lane.*



human rights the battle cry. This has happened in more than one place on our estuaries and coast: most notably at Easton Bavents and on the Blythe, with the outcome that the landowners have forced the hand of Defra into absorbing their interests into the overarching scheme. It is no coincidence that the Environment Agency has since come up with a new protocol that fosters private initiative. (3) Whilst on one hand this could be seen as a major triumph for local communities, cynically it could also be interpreted as "you can waste your money if you insist but we will not commit public funds". It would be unfair to assume that this is universally so, because in recent years we have seen audacious schemes set up, such as at East Lane at Bawdsey, where the landowners undertook to finance their own defence scheme using a fund generated by selling plots of land for development within the village envelope. This is being used as a model for a kind of public-private partnership that has lent weight over the last year to an initiative to simplify the process by which landowners might be empowered to maintain their own defences. A lesson learned from the Blythe is that it is more cost-effective for landowners to maintain their own walls than for the Environment Agency to come up with a definitive plan that would never pass a cost-benefit analysis and would be unjustifiable in the wider scheme of things.

So far on the Deben, permission has been granted, and work carried out on the wall immediately upstream of Ferry Cliff below Sutton Hoo and there is a proposal approved to stabilise the wall on the downstream corner of Kirton Creek. Taken together with the River Deben Association tidal protection scheme at Sutton Saltmarsh and the ongoing exploration of further saltmarsh stabilisation initiatives, there is a new found harmony in the relationships between the Environment Agency, Natural England and local communities. This must be to the good and is the result of our efforts to find ways to raise awareness and promote a new sense of ownership of the estuary environment and crucially, the determination not to let decisions about the dynamic of our river be taken at a level that excludes proper public consultation.

Once the Alde-Ore Estuarine Strategy has been agreed, it will be our turn. We are working towards this as a partner in the recently established Deben Estuary Partnership to ensure that the best interests of the community are duly built into the plan. There has been a great deal of misunderstanding in the past and there are bound to be some contentious issues, especially over the creation and retention of saltmarsh habitat. However, it seems to be accepted that any proposal to carry out ambitious habitat creation schemes, especially on the lower reaches of the river, would have a

detrimental effect upon its systems and possibly make the entrance unsustainable in its current form.

It has probably always been the case that a prerequisite for any new strategy is that an appropriate language must be created to couch it in. This can have the effect of putting recipients at a disadvantage. Additionally the scientific community that we must engage with is so highly specialised that it is problematic finding a middle ground where we are equipped to effectively contribute to the debate. One thing we have discovered is that its very sophistication is a stumbling block to communication; the danger of which can be that a strategy is adopted before its implications have been fully grasped. This is something that all parties are aware of and wish to remedy. There is plenty of work to be done but it is getting better and this is partly because, if we don't get it right, public outcry can derail the process, which then means that nothing happens, and everyone is a loser.

*Simon Read*

1. Defra – Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs.
2. Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2) – (see the [www.Suffolk.smp2.org.uk/policy](http://www.Suffolk.smp2.org.uk/policy).)
3. Flood and Coastal Risk Management (FCRM) external contributions. Issued 16.06.10. (See the Environment Agency Website.)

## **Editor's Note:**

A survey is being carried out to assess the erosion of the beach in front of the 'rocks' and any associated movement of the 'rock armour'.

The consultation period for the Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan (SMP2) has ended. The plan has to be formally adopted by Local Councils, the Environment Agency and the Secretary of State.

The Estuarine Strategy for the Alde and the Ore is under discussion and when this has been agreed the Deben Estuary Strategy will be considered. More information can be found on the Suffolk Coast Futures web page.

The Environment Agency and the Shoreline Management Plan frequently use the term sustainable, for example, sustainable assessment, sustainable development, sustainable structures, sustainable defence and so on. For a discussion of Sustainable Policy and the different usages see Section 3.2 of the SMP2.

## DEBEN RIVER WALL HERITAGE

The river walls hold the fabric of life together in the Deben valley, but just out of historical curiosity, when were they built? I have had a stab at dating them and I hope you will tell me the parts I have got wrong. On the purely practical side the earth banks holding back the tide protect property worth well in excess of £121,000,000. Without their protection the homes lost through flooding would result in having to build another small town on open countryside in the area. The cost and social upheaval would be enormous. The loss of revenue to the Government if the area protected was lost, far out weighs the cost of keeping the defences in place. Without the river walls the damage to wild life habit behind them would be immense, and some species might well vanish from the Deben Valley.

One thing is certain; it took over three hundred years to construct the present system. It is possible that some small areas were walled off before the Norman Conquest. If the Romans had made walls it is unlikely they would still have been there some seven hundred years later when the powerful landowners, monastic and aristocratic, started to develop their coastal property, in the middle of the medieval period.

The next burst of walling seems to have happened in the late Tudor and Elizabethan era. Effective defences against the tide always happen when there is a strong central government. For instance Henry VIII, although he

had a disastrous record with women and dieting, did everything in his power to protect England, and that included encouraging sea defences.

History has clearly recorded that the Dutch were heavily involved with reclaiming land in The Fens and South Essex, but there is no real evidence of them on the Suffolk coast until the building of the first East Lane, Bawdsey defences in the twentieth century. The Suffolk Rivers all appear to have been reclaimed by local men working with shovels and barrows. Sometimes they just shovelled a bank up and in other places they put in a row of posts and then shovelled dirt around them. It was not rocket science but it was extremely beneficial to the local community. In the summer the high land dried out, particularly on the 'sheep walks' (heaths), and there was a real need to create summer grazing for sheep, cattle and horses.

Since there was very regular commercial contact between the East of England and The Low Countries new ideas from The Netherlands were taken on board. The Dutch word 'sluice' was used for places where fresh water escaped into tidal water. However, some of the language got mixed up. The 'ditches' draining the grazing marshes were often referred to as being 'dykes' while in The Netherlands the actual walls keeping out tidal water were the 'dykes.' The wide ditch/dyke immediately behind the river walls are called 'delfts' in Suffolk so perhaps the idea came from that town in Holland. In Suffolk,

Essex and Kent land on the tidal side of a river is called 'saltings.' In the past decade incomers have tended to use the Norfolk term 'salt marsh' for these areas. The soft grey mud below the saltings is usually referred to as being 'ooze' leading down to the 'cant edge' at the low tide mark.

It is always assumed that the marshes at the lower end of the River Deben were walled off first. This is because the saltings, which took centuries to build up, are higher on the Black Stakes and Ramsholt Reaches. However, we are told that much of the silt in the Deben comes in from the sea and it doesn't appear that this silt goes higher than the Ramsholt Reach.

Hoskinson's map of 1786 appears to show Kings Fleet, Bawdsey Fleet, Kirton and Shottisham Creek all walled off. King's Fleet, on the Felixstowe shore, was a very deep creek leading almost up to Trimley St Mary. This was known as Gosford and the medieval kings used it as a safe place to gather fleets when they were fighting the French kings in the Low Countries. On one occasion the French Fleet crept into the Deben and burnt the English king's ships at anchor in King's Fleet. There are accounts of brakes in the river wall at Walton in 1287 so that the Felixstowe side of King's Fleet must have been already walled off. More land was being enclosed at Walton in 1321.

While King's Fleet was too deep to wall off, the saltings on either side were ripe for development in the eyes of Elizabethan courtiers. In around

1550 the Duke of Norfolk, who had already walled off 400 acres at Hollesley, reclaimed the Falkenham marshes up to Falkenham Creek. It would seem that the Kirton Marshes, up to Kirton Creek, were walled off shortly after this, possibly as a speculative venture by the Corporation of Ipswich.

King's Fleet is thought to have got its name from King Charles I, because he probably gave permission for it to be walled off, after several centuries of silting. The remaining channel through the saltings, Perkin's Creek, stayed open as a drainage ditch for the sluice, but in the modern period this kept silting up. One of curious pieces of modern nonsense was that English Nature refused to allow the silted up King's Fleet drainage channel to be cleaned out. Instead in about 2001 a new pumping station had to be built up river near Red House Farm, Falkenham. Instead of the environmentally friendly sluice emptying the fresh water, as it had done for centuries without using any power, the new pumping station has to be powered by electricity.

While the Walton Marshes around Holmhill appear to have been 'inmed' or walled off by the 1200s they were still liable to flooding with the tide coming over the land where Felixstowe Ferry and the golf course now stand. Before 1786 a wall was built, at the back of the present golf course, to prevent flooding of Walton Marshes. In 1876 this wall was rebuilt and named the Tomlin Wall, presumably after the owner of the

Orwell Park Estate that then owned much of the Felixstowe peninsula. In the 1948 Flood the Tomlin Wall held, but in the 1953 Flood, when all the Ferry, but the Harbour Villas, flooded, this Wall broke in two places.

It was still possible until the 1950s to stand in front of the 'Ferry Boat Inn' at Felixstowe Ferry and look out to the boats on the river and out to sea, but Felixstowe Ferry flooded with a very high tide. The Tomlin Wall was heightened again with soil taken from around the beach huts on the sea front, but the protection of the Ferry houses was archived by piling up shingle in front of the 'Ferry Boat Inn.' Since then the sea front and the old wall has been heightened, but some buildings outside the wall are still liable to flood. The river mouth front at the Felixstowe Ferry was further 'rock armoured' in 2001 and 2006. The battle is not won yet.

Butley Priory owned manors in Alderton, Bawdsey and Ramsholt and in about 1340 they walled in a piece of marshes below Alderton to the west of Bawdsey Fleet. The word 'fleet' in Suffolk just means 'shallow' and was usually applied to main drainage ditches and creeks. On the opposite side of the river to Bawdsey Fleet is King's Fleet and after 1953 Floods engineers started to call Bawdsey Fleet, the Queen's Fleet, to match the King's Fleet on the other side.



The present Bawdsey Ferry to Ramsholt Dock wall (above) appears to have been built outside the Butley Priory wall, in about 1525. Since the land enclosed belonged to the Manor of Peyton Hall, owned by the Wallers, presumably they built this wall. Although a wall across the mouth appears on a map at Bawdsey Fleet, in the Victorian period a coal barge used to go up to Alderton Kiln until about the 1860s. It could still have been open, for a schooner discharged coal at Bawdsey Ferry and it carted to a barge to go up the Fleet.

After the 1953 Floods the Government was keen to bring all the former grazing marshes into cultivation and Jim Mann and Norman Simper had the part of the inner Butley Priory wall beside upper Bawdsey Fleet bulldozed out. The rest of this wall remains under the track leading across the marshes. The land on the tidal side of the inner wall was about 2ft higher than the

original reclaimed marshes.

The Ramsholt Dock Marshes, a small area of marshes between Ramsholt Dock Wood and the church, appear to have been walled off in two attempts. A small area at the top was walled first and later the present wall was added. According to local legend ships used to anchor in the river and their crews rowed up to Ramsholt Street, where the old school is, to get water from the well there. This would suggest that the present wall, which did not have any saltings on the riverside until the present decade, was constructed much later than the other walls.

Again the Shottisham Creek Marshes were walled in two ventures, the first, on the Ramsholt side of the Creek, probably in the medieval period, but there was an oyster fishery in Shottisham Creek before it was walled and sluice fitted. The saltings are much higher than normal here, but this bight in the river does appear to collect silt coming down river.

Until the twentieth century all the river wall maintenance was the responsibility of the landowners. Actually it appears that few of them paid for this, but got their tenants to do it as part of their rent. However, the Catchment Boards were set up to maintain river defences and landowners had to pay them a levy. When the Shottisham Creek Marshes wall broke in 1904, the landowner, Sir Cuthbert Quilter, demanded that the Catchment Board should fill in the gap, the old mouth of Shottisham Creek.

In fact the law appears to state that the Board had the right to enter land to repair walls, but were not legally obliged to do this. The landowner had a long dispute with The Board and the gap remained open for years. The Shottisham Creek gap was eventually closed, and closed again after the 1953 Floods, but on the opposite shore the Hemley Hall marshes were flooded and are still flooded by the tide.



When I first rowed into the gap in Hemley wall in about 1951 it had clearly been flooded for sometime, but when did this wall break? In 1770 John Cross bought Hemley Hall and his family were there for three generations. In 1888 Porter bought the farm and went on to enlarge the house. At some point the wall broke and flooded the marsh and Porter took Government departments, responsible for walls, to court and lost, resulting in him having to sell the house and farm. In the 1930's the farm was owned by Wilding with Harry Kent farming it until 1956. The Hayward family have since farmed the upper land and the gap in the wall

has turned into a major channel.

Further up river there is an account of land being walled off at Melton in 1600, by which time most of the present walls were in place. The one area of saltings that was never walled off, but was grazed until about 1914, was around Broomeswell Common.

The Melton wall seems to have been fairly successful, but the Sutton Hoo marshes, opposite Mel Skeet's yard in the old Melton Dock, had low walls and were constantly flooding. These were over topped several times in the 1930s. By then the agricultural depression, which had started in about 1870, meant that the river walls were in really poor shape. When a bomb hit the Sutton Hoo wall in Hackney Hole, at the beginning of World War II, it was realized that the whole wall had to be made higher and there were not the resources during the war to do this, even with the food shortages.

The same was true of the river wall near Cross Farm, Waldringfield. Damaged bombers coming back used to jettison their bombs over empty countryside before landing and one hit this wall. Again the wall was not repaired because of wartime shortages. This then flooded, through a 40m gap, right up to Martlesham Creek.

After the War serious work started on wall repairs. I remember seeing prisoners of war working with shovels making up the river walls in front of Peyton Hall, Ramsholt. I remember this because one of them tried to sell me a model of a ship in a bottle, but I

didn't have any money to buy it.

All the levels of Deben marshes were flooded in the 1953 Floods and flood work started by pumping out the marshes and repairing the walls. The Bawdsey-Ramsholt wall and Felixstowe Ferry-Kirton walls protected important agricultural land so that they got the most attention. If my memory serves me right there were about 23 gaps in the Bawdsey-Ramsholt wall alone. Also these walls were heightened by about 3ft, although the Government report recommended up to 5m above low water mark. By the time Stonner Point was reached the money was running out and the upper walls didn't get the same attention. The process of heightening the river walls has been going on for centuries.

A small area of wall, at the bottom field below Methersgate Hall, was left at the original low height. Just up river of Methersgate Quay a small area of grazing marsh gaps were left and the land abandoned. Sir Raymond Quilter, a man who loved a new idea, then used this flooded marshes to lay up his ex-Cornish fishing boat Silver Darling during the winter.

The nation was well rewarded for the capital invested in the reinstating the river defences. Part of the rise in living standards, which really got going in the 1960s, was as a direct result of cheap and plentiful food being available in the shops.

At Waldringfield Norman Mayhew's Cross Farm marshes have remained flooded, but the other end of this level

has been reclaimed. In about 1972, John Symes of Hill Farm, Martlesham bought a digger and built a short piece of new wall that prevented the tide from flooding his land right up to Martlesham Creek. Since then the marshes have returned to grazing and the area is popular with walkers.

The last major piece of wall repair was at Woodbridge in 1992 when the height of the wall was raised between Kyson Point and the Melton railway bridge. Doors were also fitted in the wall so that in some places boats and cars could be taken down nearer the water. In 2009 Peter Waring repaired the river wall at Sutton Hoo. This was the first time a landowner had paid directly for river wall repair work for over a century although landowners all pay flood rates.

In the modern world any long-term project is scrutinised to see if it is 'sustainable' so that this should be applied to present river walls. In about 1950 the Northern Point below Bawdsey Manor at the Deben entrance was protected by sheet piling. This worked brilliantly for half a century, but the piling is now rusting badly, making it not sustainable in modern thinking; however, the earth walls have been in continual use since the medieval period.

Conservation lobby has forcefully argued, and the Government has believed them, that flooding East

*Groynes and sheet pilings at Bawdsey Quay*



Coast marshes would increase the available habitat for wading birds. However, when the Deben Estuary Partnership, formed last year, came to look closely at flooded marshes it was found that the increase in sea level was resulting in silt being washed out of these lands, in fact reducing the amount of bird habitat.

Robert Simper

## **BOATS OF THE DEBEN ELLEN**

Having worked in the Boatyard for 42 years building wooden boats of all types, I then, at the age of 60, had the chance to take on the Ferry service which ran from the Ferry - Bawdsey Quay. The boat I obtained for this was the motorboat 'Ellen'.

Ellen's pedigree goes back a long way. In 1960 the Boatyard was part of C H Fox and Son of Ipswich and a new yard boat was needed. Trevor Moore, the manager at the time, drew some lines out for an 18' motorboat. This was lofted out and a boat was built using an assortment of timber.

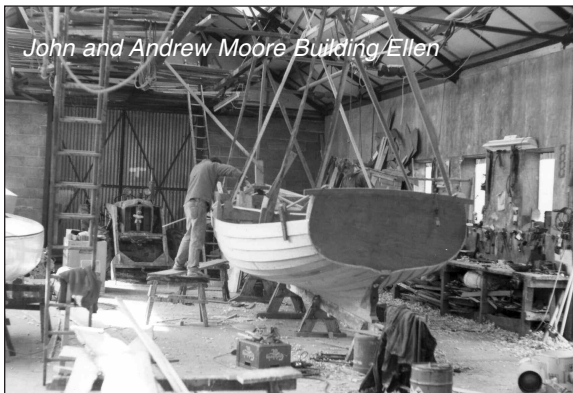
This boat was rather narrow beamed. One other boat was built on these lines for the Felixstowe Ferry Sailing Club. After that we decided that a boat with an extra foot of beam but with the same shear would be better. Several of these boats were built as lobster boats for the local fishermen, the first of these 'Eileen R' was for Duncan Read. Bearing in mind at this time an 18' boat with a Lister diesel in cost £750. At this time we were also building passenger boats to Board of Trade specification for Charlie Brinkley to run the Ferry and several for trip boats at Blakeney and Morston on the north Norfolk coast.

Besides these motor vessels we were also building Folkboats and small yachts to Alan Bucannan's design, as well as all the repair to mainly wooden boats.

In 1989 the yard boat was getting past it's best after 30 years of very hard work and so the keel of a new one was layed down. At the same time we thought it prudent to build another on spec, so two were set up and built. These were made on the same moulds as the previous 18' boats but we pulled the length out to 19'.

These boats were built of larch planking with oak keels, stems and timbers and were fitted with Vetus 22 HP engines. The engines were a basic Mitsubishi engine marinised in Holland by Vetus.

Ellen was sold to a gentleman from



Methersgate in 1990 and was used as a family motor launch for trips up and down the river.

At about this time Peter Weir was running river trips from Orford in a boat built by Frank Knights of Woodbridge. He then acquired the licence to run the Bawdsey Ferry and bought an 18' boat called Puffin to run the service. This boat had been built by us some years earlier for Blakeney. In about 1995 he acquired Ellen for use on the service. Being a bit bigger she was more suitable for the job. In 1999 I acquired the Ferry licence and bought Ellen off Peter.

I ran the Ferry for 6 years and then retired, retaining the boat for my Harbour Master's duties and also to run river trips. The boat has a S.C.D. Council licence to carry 12 persons and carries all the appropriate safety equipment to do so.

I use the boat to regularly check the Bar and to survey the knolls around the estuary entrance. In this way I can give the best possible advice to yachtsmen on entering or leaving the Deben, how much water there is over

the Bar at any particular time, etc. When I was running the Ferry the engine would do at least 1000 hours running a season. This led me into replacing the engine in 2002, keeping the old one as a spare. Apart from that everything about the boat is original. Ellen is in use almost every day throughout the year except for an annual refit and inspection to retain the passenger licence. It's a great feeling to be using a boat that was built by myself and the

September 19th, is International Coastal Cleanup Day, and, like all good members of the River Deben Association, we are filling black bin liners with rubbish from the waterfront. The scene is just like the ones we've known for the past twelve years: keen volunteers stretched in a raggly line along the water's edge, variously tutting at the stuff that some people seem to think they can just chuck into the sea, and calling their neighbours over to examine a

particularly juicy find - a lump of metal that could once have been a hand-turned Singer sewing machine, or a rusted enamel basin with the faint remains of a pink-petalled flower design.

Lumps of wood, broken glass bottles, a couple of biros, quantities of decomposing polystyrene, a great hank of unravelling



enjoyment of being on the finest river on the East Coast adds to the enjoyment. Long may it remain.

*John White*

## **Litter picks - the same the world over.**

*Members will recall that Anthony Mason was Chairman of the RDA before Denzil Cowdry. In 2008 Anthony and his wife Celia set off in their yacht Tomia to sail the Atlantic. Celia sent us this note from Grenada.*

nylon rope, a broken plastic beer crate, has anybody got any more bin liners? . . . *plus ca change* . . . several large sheets of rusty corrugated iron, brown glass bottles that once contained Mauby Drink or LLB, more bottles, with the faded labels of Clarke's Court and Westerhall rum distilleries ... the remains of a white plastic bucket that will be good to store the dinner-plate sized white land-crabs before they are cooked. .. our shoes may be rubbing, but there is no way we can walk barefoot on the

burning sand. .. pausing to wipe the sweat from our faces as the sun beats down on the clear blue water of Flamingo Bay... noisy banter in patois as cane and manchineel trees are hacked back by boys wielding cutlasses... we are a long way from familiar wind swept marshes.

**"Welcome to Grenada!"**

The clean-up was scheduled to start at 10.00, but this is GMT (Grenada Maybe Time), so when we arrive at 10.30, having managed to track down a maxi bus going the right way, things are just about thinking about getting started. A couple of guys from St George's University and the North West Development Agency are having a last drink of iced water before setting to. Flamingo Bay has not been "picked" since Hurricane Ivan devastated the island in 2004, and there is a bar just above the cliff half way along, so we are expecting plenty to cart away and there is.

There are sheets and sheets of rusty "galvanise" - that is, corrugated iron - each one formerly the roof of someone's house or chicken shed or loo. The sewing machine too, probably got blown over during the hurricane, along with all the other contents of a house; there is no way something as valuable as that would just have been thrown out.

For the rest, well, it's pretty much what you'd expect when there's a bar above the beach. The added complication is the dense growth of sugar cane and poisonous manchineel trees all the way up the

banks, so the locals set to with their cutlasses (the local machete, vital for anything from gutting fish to clearing undergrowth, and carried as ubiquitously and casually in the countryside as a mobile phone). As they cut, a team carry the debris away, and another rakes the revealed rubbish down onto the beach to be sorted, noted by the visiting academic, and bagged. A snake of porters carries the resulting bin liners along the beach, above their heads, like a convoy of ants.

A host of small children, belonging to the cleaner-uppers, are splashing in the shallows, playing with a rubber tyre and a tired tennis ball we unearthed (and, inevitably, leaving the cleaned beach strewn with straws and cartons from their drinks). Over at the far end of the beach, an octopus has been caught, and is being beaten to death - or perhaps tenderised - on a rock.

Gradually as the day wore on, our trips to the cool box got more and more frequent, and we were all increasingly loath to leave the shade. Was that another couple of empty bottles of rum just appeared? We've filled two skips; time for a celebratory party. And we think of you all going home in your gumboots to tea, and raise a glass from the other side of the (slightly cleaner) ocean.

*Celia and Anthony Mason .*

*You can follow their voyage on <http://voyageoftomia.blogspot.com>*

RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDING  
DECEMBER 31 2009

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE		2009		2008	
Income	£	£	£	£	£
Subscriptions inc arrears	2,777			2,811	
Donations Inc BBC	450			256	
Woodbridge Society	0			200	
Bank interest	6			345	
Refreshments	36			35	
Sundries inc cash	15				
Suffolk Coastal DC	2,500				
		<b><u>5,784</u></b>		<b><u>3,647</u></b>	
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Postage	342			287	
Secretary's Honorarium	300			100	
Offices services/stationary	0			25	
Newsletters	768			798	
Other printing	7			2	
Hire of hall/meeting room	120			100	
Meeting costs	80			75	
Insurance	190			183	
Civic Trust	200			200	
Other	260			11	
Maritime Woodbridge	0			249	
Sutton Shore Project	1,615			5,870	
Bank charges	0			15	
		<b><u>3,882</u></b>		<b><u>7,915</u></b>	
<b>Excess of income (Deficit)</b>			<b><u>1,902</u></b>		<b><u>-4,268</u></b>
<b>BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2009</b>					
<b>Assets</b>					
Bank	11,342			9,297	
Cash	130			57	9,354
			11,472		
<b>Less Liabilities</b>					
<b>Creditors</b>					
Advance subscriptions	168			152	
Civic Trust	200				
			368		152
<b>Net Assets</b>		<b><u>11,104</u></b>		<b><u>9,202</u></b>	
<b>Representing</b>					
Balance brought forward	9,202			13,470	
Surplus(Deficit)	1,902			-4,268	
<b>Balance carried forward</b>		<b><u>11,104</u></b>		<b><u>9,202</u></b>	

*C J L Brown*

C J L Brown (Hon Treasurer)

*25 February 2010.*

I have examined the papers and vouchers of the association for the year ended 31 December 2009 and confirm that the above income and expenditure account and the balance sheet are in accordance therewith.

*T S Moorby*

*25 February 2010.*

T J Moorby, Chartered Accountant (Hon Independent Examiner)  
Woodbridge

RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDING  
DECEMBER 31 2009

Notes to the accounts:

1. Generally the Association's finances are sound but not capable of supporting any extensive projects. Although the balance is strong the income is small.

2. The Sutton Shore project has been completed. The total expenditure for the project over the two years amounted to £7485. The sum of £2500 was granted for the project by Suffolk Coastal DC. Making a net cost to the association of £4985.

3. The grant has thus enables the Association to return a small surplus on the income and expenditure this year thus restoring the Balance to £11104

4. Subscriptions: The subscription income in 2008 was £2777. This was a small decrease on last year. About 13% of members are still not paying the subscriptions approved for 2004 and not since changed. A proportion of the income paid was arrears.

5. The subscription income that the membership represents was £3010. The subscription yield is some 17% less than this. The Association is grateful for the generous donations paid by some supporters.

6. This year the members who show on the Association's record not to have paid the full subscription over a period have been asked to clarify this and get either the records or the subscriptions up to date. Failure to do so in persistent cases, on the grounds of fairness to the majority, may not receive further copies of the Newsletter.

7. A statement or letter about underpayment was sent to members this year in April. These showed how the last subscription was paid so that any action to ensure the correct payment this year should be clear. There are some members who have changed their standing order. This seems to have resulted in a new standing order for the new amount being opened but the old standing order has remained in place. Any members who notices that there is more than one standing order in favour of the Association are advised to cancel that which is for the wrong amount. The Association cannot change Members standing order. Those that do pay twice are making a welcome but possible inadvertent donation to the Association.

**THE RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION**  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

on Thursday 22nd April 2010

at 7.30pm

in

**Woodbridge Community Hall**

The AGM will be followed by  
a talk given by

**Mr Robert Simper**

historian and author of 37 books including  
5 on the Deben

*entitled*

**“Behind the River Walls”**

*Land ownership along the tidal Deben down the years*