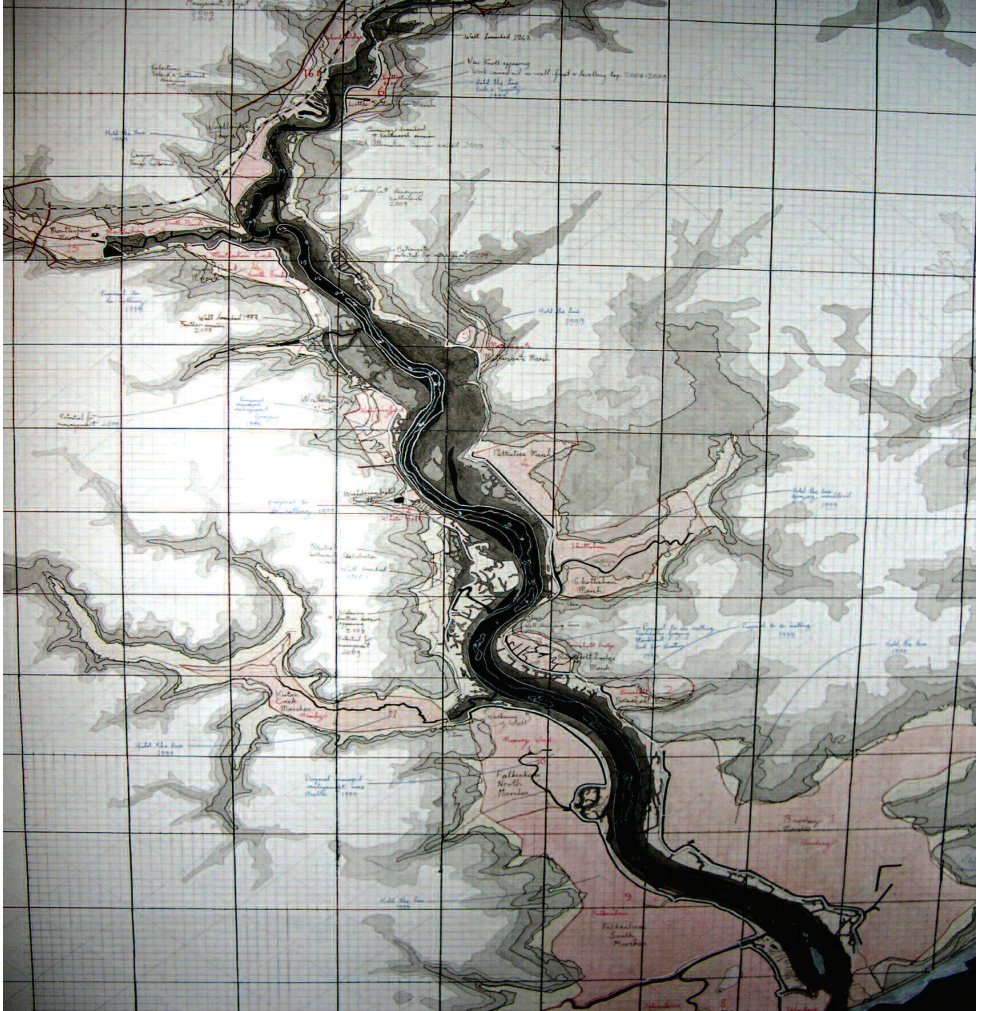


The Deben



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The River Deben Association

Officers and Committee

November 2012

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Cover: The River Deben - Simon Read

EDITORIAL



Principle 6: accountability

Recently, a founding member of the RDA said *'As a matter of fact I am considering leaving all of it on the basis of disillusionment, as it seems obvious to me that we will never retain the Deben as we love it while it has to be prostituted to public demand in order to retain charity status in order to obtain the huge grants needed for retaining and repairing the river walls to keep it as a river and not a flood plain..... Enjoy what's there while it's there I say and never mind the grandchildren!'*

I think the sentiment of enjoying the moment is admirable especially as one sits in the hospital waiting room eyeing the other candidates and assessing ones relative shape as a pensioner. I am certainly going to leave the building of flood defences round my house, should any be necessary, to my children.

However, I still feel a need to counter any proclivity towards apathy and strive to be active and involved. Given the complexity and power of contemporary bureaucracy it is hard to keep up the energy. Witness those who campaigned on behalf of NANT and the energy and determination they gave to the cause. Many are probably battle weary and not ready for another campaign. The emphasis on public relations, the obfuscating language and the often 'fluffy' answers that are provided in response to queries is off-putting and leaves one with a sense of powerlessness.

Recently, however, I have been engaged in discussions with the National Trust about a fence which I feel is a scar on the landscape, (nowhere near the Deben.) As part of the helpful discourse I am having with representatives of the Trust I came across the Trust's Conservation Policy and in particular Principle 6: Accountability which states:

'We will be transparent and accountable by recording our decisions and sharing knowledge to enable the best conservation decisions to be taken both today and by future generations.'

Our legacy to the future is formed by the record of our activities as much as by the places we preserve and pass on through our work. Only by recording and making accessible the decisions and actions both of ourselves and our predecessors can we be truly accountable to present and future generations.....

It is essential, therefore that our contemporaries and our successors are given every opportunity to understand what we have done and why, through responsible record keeping....Future generations may question our judgement and decisions by the conventions of their time. But through understanding the reasons behind them are in a better position to undo, reverse or retreat any consequential damage. '

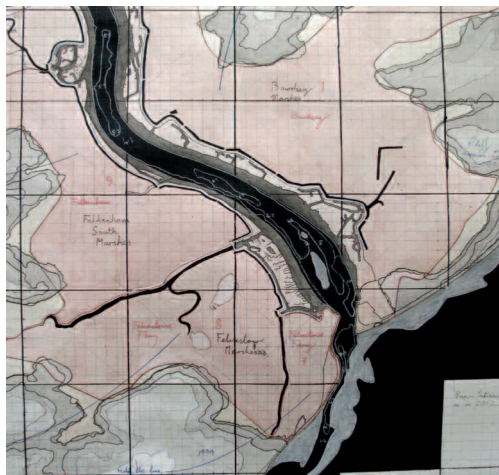
This could become the mantra for the RDA. The RDA has a role to play in helping people understand, question and debate the assumptions which lie behind the policies and proposals made by agencies on behalf of The Deben, whether it is SCDC, Suffolk Coasts and Heaths, the DEP or the Environment Agency. We need to encourage alternative perspectives and debate. We need to ensure that decisions are based on reliable information and research and that the logic behind

recommendations and decisions is sound. This will help to ensure that policies are tested, robust and the best possible conclusions are reached.

So even if some things are left to the grandchildren this a viable purpose for the RDA. If we can achieve progress in these areas it will hopefully energise us and counter any apathy or disillusionment we may be inclined to feel.

I hope you will have noticed that this is the first colour edition of the Deben. If you haven't, it is worrying. Modern technology means we can do this without a massive hike in the price. Without colour we could not do justice to Robert Hughes' article on the saltmarsh which, while it explores the issues associated with erosion, encourages us to look closely and see the natural richness of saltmarsh. Cornish Shrimpers on the Deben provides a glimpse of the spirit of adventure of our Chairman 'elect'. Sir Cuthbert Quilter was another big personality and I have written about his sea defences off Bawdsey. After much trying I have managed to track down Simon Read the artist as opposed to the 'saltmarsh specialist'. 'Africa' comes to us in the shape of our Boat of the Deben 'Potamus'. We have memories of Deben Week and Mike Atkins' wonderful account of his first RDA Committee Meeting as well as some informative letters including one about the Bawdsey Ferry.

Lastly, a big thank you to Leigh who throughout his tenure has stayed focused and worked hard in developing the RDA into a contemporary organisation equipped to represent those who love and use the Deben. He has the unique distinction of being the first Chairperson to find a successor before his retirement date. Well done Leigh!



Cover : 'The Deben' by Simon Read

Viewed close up, Simons's painting of the Deben includes topographical features with handwritten notes referring to current issues and debates relating to particular areas of the river. (See Page 23)



River Deben Association

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

When I took the Chairman's reins from Ed Stanford three years ago, I had a number of specific objectives for the association. Now, as I prepare to pass them to a new Chairman, you would be quite justified in asking whether those objectives have been met.

The short answer is that, in most respects, they have been. But I must emphasise that this is only because of your hard-working **COMMITTEE**, and some rather long – and lively - committee meetings. I want to pay

tribute to these committed people, who not only love the Deben but have been prepared to contribute time and effort to protecting it for others to enjoy.

Some objectives involved improving **COMMUNICATION** with our members. We now have an attractive and easy-to-navigate website, that serves not only to keep our members up-to-date with developments that affect their use of the river, but also as an online brochure for enquirers, as well as a source of information and guidance to river users in general. Doubtless, it will soon offer a Facebook link and other social media facilities. And I mustn't forget that we are now able to communicate with at least half of our members by email.

Our present **MEMBERSHIP** of 920 is, I think, the highest in our history. More than that, it is my perception that the average age of our membership has dropped in recent years. The RDA's **CONSTITUTION** has been revised, too, reflecting more accurately our purpose and work

Some very appreciative comments have been received from members about **"THE DEBEN"**, our twice-yearly magazine, into which David Bucknell has put so much hard work. He never ceases to amaze us, even those who thought they knew the river well, with information and stories about Deben boats and Deben people of times gone by.

The **RDA FORUM** has been particularly well received. Representatives of all Deben-based organisations – sailing clubs, fairway committees, wildlife interests, boatyards, youth groups, etc – are invited each November to tell us of developments or concerns within their own organisations, and are in turn briefed about the work of national and local bodies, both statutory and voluntary, that will impact the Deben itself. The Forums are always characterised by lively discussion and valuable networking.

The only disappointment has been our failure over the issue of **SPEEDING**. Convinced that effective enforcement is the only way to resolve the problem, we worked closely with the police Safer Neighbourhood Team on a project, based on a successful operation in Essex and Kent, which would have put a police officer afloat on a PWC. But, understandably, the police would only have proceeded with the clear support of the river community, which was not forthcoming. With no other viable solution on the table, the issue was shelved. However, interest has recently been re-kindled by reports of success elsewhere, but there's nothing further to tell you at the moment.

Our work alongside, and as part of, the **DEBEN ESTUARY PARTNERSHIP** has intensified of late, as the **ESTUARY MANAGEMENT PLAN** is finalised and prepared for publication, probably in the autumn. As RDA Chairman, I sit on the DEP Steering Group, where my brief is to represent the views and interests of river users. The results of our own survey of river users last year were fed into the Plan, which the DEP is working to have adopted by Suffolk Coastal DC as an "estuarine plan" under Strategic Policy SP30, "The Coastal Zone". It would then become one of the many policy documents that have to be taken into account when planning applications are considered.

On the matter of **PLANNING**, many of you expressed concern during our 2012 Autumn Open Meeting over the impact on the river of several proposed **HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS**. I am delighted to say that Veronica Falconer, an RDA member and former Chair of Suffolk Coastal DC, has since been co-opted to our committee. With long experience of planning issues, Veronica has agreed to assist both the DEP and the RDA in assessing present and future planning

proposals, and the effectiveness of any mitigation measures proposed.

In line with a policy of **SALT MARSH RESTORATION** rather than its creation from scratch, two projects – on the Sutton shore and at Sutton Hoo – are showing encouraging signs of regeneration. Simon Read, as a member of the **DEP ENVIRONMENT GROUP** as well as the RDA committee, is now spearheading the restoration of an area at Kingsfleet in co-operation with the landowner. Parallel to this work has been recognition of the need for **FURTHER RESEARCH** into the causes of saltmarsh deterioration before further work is undertaken. James Skellorn, with a particular interest in the subject, was co-opted to the RDA committee late last year, and Carol Reid BSC (Hons) Life Sciences, an independent ecologist and former conservation adviser with Natural England/English Nature, was commissioned jointly by the RDA and DEP to survey all research to date. She was asked, with particular reference to the Deben, to make recommendations for further work, and to pinpoint gaps in the research which could justify a formal in-depth study by an academic institution. Her report has just been produced.

The RDA has been asked by the DEP to ascertain the methods of operation and views of **FAIRWAY COMMITTEES**, as well as their policies in respect of moorings, to ensure that they are incorporated in the Estuary Management Plan.

A report, very recently produced by Andrew Hawes Associates, is a survey of all flood cells on the river, and the condition of the **RIVER WALLS** that protect them. It is reckoned that about £2 million is needed to cover the most urgent work; the DEP is actively looking at funding options, and will incorporate the report's findings into the Estuary Plan.

It is good to know that **WALDRINGFIELD BOATYARD** has been purchased, with no reason to believe that it will not continue to benefit local people and the river community. The **WHISSTOCKS PROJECT** looks to be progressing in a way that satisfies most conditions set by the river community, the planning authority, and the current owners and their bank. There's been some lively public debate in recent weeks, with some concerned that the acceptance of a commercial residential element on a former boatyard site could be a thin end of the planning wedge.

The importance of interesting **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE** in the river and how it works prompted a discussion between Simon Read and Bee Farrell at the Maritime Woodbridge event in September. Bee spends some of her time as an education officer with the Tide Mill Trust, and invited Simon to assist her with a project with children from Bawdsey Primary School. Much excitement and laughter accompanied a stimulating time for the children, which may serve as a model for further projects.

Our **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** on 26th April is an opportunity to hear from the main contractors about the engineering and geological issues to be overcome in drilling under the river and Martlesham Creek, fulfilling their undertaking to underground all cabling from the **East Anglia One OFFSHORE WINDFARM** between Bawdsey and Bramford, where it feeds into the national grid. Notice of the meeting is on the back of this magazine; the AGM agenda is enclosed separately, together with the Accounts for 2012. I look forward to seeing you at what promises to be a most informative evening. In conclusion, I am so pleased – indeed, relieved! – that **ROBIN WHITTLE** is standing as Chairman for the next three years. Robin, who was co-opted to the committee late last year, lives in Woodbridge,

has a chalet at Felixstowe ferry, and is a member of Waldringfield Sailing Club. He has sailed on the Deben throughout his life, as well as in many places further afield. Together with a background in civil engineering, Robin is admirably qualified to take the association forward, and I have every confidence he will do so with his usual irrepressible enthusiasm. May I urge you to support his nomination by the committee at the AGM.

I wish you all an excellent 2013 season, ashore or afloat.

Leigh Belcham



Robin Whittle

In his Chairman's Report, Leigh has noted my nomination by the Committee at the AGM to take on the reins from him as Chairman. This is not going to be an easy act to follow.

Although I have been a member of the RDA for fifteen years my knowledge of it has been through reading the magazine and writing the occasional article for it. It has been quite a shock to realise how much goes on behind the scenes.

Leigh has accomplished much, not only in what he has declared in his objectives, but by setting up the data base of the membership with new software, which includes all the history of subscriptions paid and owed. It has been a major task just to keep this constantly up-to-date and Leigh has done this in addition to his work as Chairman. He is leaving the 'engine' of the RDA in very good shape for which I am most grateful.

Although I have not been a member of the Committee for very long I appreciate the knowledge and skill of its members. I hope I will be able to support them in their particular interests in a sensible way.

For me the RDA represents a voice for those who wish to preserve the beauty of the Deben valley and keep the river from becoming overcrowded. I certainly support the work in which the Committee is currently involved namely checking the effect of: increasing population/tourism, changes to the saltmarshes, moorings, siltation and dredging, laying the windfarm cabling, young people's projects, Deben Estuary Plan, Whisstocks project, Adastral Park, sewage disposal (listed in the autumn 2012 issue of 'The Deben'). Understanding how the saltmarshes grow and diminish appears to be a black art and I hope that we can eventually bring some clarity to the subject. I am one of those people who would love to see a continuous path along the river from Bawdsey to Wilford Bridge, but it may be too much to expect to achieve this in the three years allotted as Chairman.

The Deben Estuary Plan is becoming an official document and I believe it will be important for the RDA to ensure that it is used to preserve, as far as possible, the interests of our members expressed in the RDA survey results of last year.

It is important that our membership continues to increase. It is through the membership (all of us) that we can have a strong voice.

Robin Whittle

NEWS FROM THE HARDS

WOODBIDGE

Anne Moore writes:

Clear of boats, on this late winter afternoon, there was not even a moon in this symphony of greys and, standing there on the hard at Kyson Point, I reflected on what Jennifer Skeet at Melton Boatyard had said to me, that 'launching has been a bit later by the year - now most go in, in May and June - only the die-hards launch for Easter.'

Mel had told me how they had established the yard in Melton back in 1981. A real Suffolk man, they had not come from far away – just moved round from the Orwell. The awful winter weather of rain, rain and more rain had meant little outside work had been done. But I'd seen two pretty craft near the hard, one, a dainty looking barge named 'Dinah', owned by Richard Johnson, farmer from Iken; this craft had been featured in an off-beat Sky T/V programme, about three years ago. Next to it was a barge that looked splendid, standing high there out of the water, belonging to Tim Allen whom many of our members know. Her intriguing name is 'Twee Gebroeders' and it is planned to moor her at Pin Mill this season, for holiday let – a floating cottage. Do any of our readers know the origin of her name? Tim would, no doubt, but I could not find his telephone number. She is having, in Mel's words, a "knock out" refit.

Larkman's are extremely busy and have not found time to follow up my telephone enquiries which augers well for this season and our local boat-based economy.

Mike Illingworth, always helpful, at Robertsons said Nancy Blackett of Arthur

Ransome fame, had been 'in' again this winter as usual and had been repainted as well as re-galvanising of the chain plates, a new saloon 'sole', the ballast taken out cleaned and repainted inside before replacing all the ballast. A Nicholson 36, named 'Temerair', would be coming in soon and a whisperer from Burnham; 'Breeze' a 35ft Holman built in 1921; a Ragged Robin and the early Hillyard, 'Margery', still there, being restored by her owners Chris and Pat Baker of Mendlesham – a good idea really, don't you think – I mean, I wouldn't mind going down to a boat to get out of the house sometimes, or, perhaps, no, I think a good walk somewhere might be more recreational Robin Whittle, our prospective RDA Chairman's Cornish Shrimper was in for renewal of the 'awlgrip' system and now, soon to go out.

As I left, I found, in Mike Clark's workshop, Tim Smith, on an apprenticeship from Lowestoft Technical College (not to be confused with the IBTC – the International Boat Building Training College) working away with the doors open, in the bitter cold, making the mould for the remake of an Albert Strange clinker built dinghy – a replica of the tender to "Mist" – to be given to the Sea Scouts as part of the Charity Status requirement for these apprenticeships.

Woodbridge Boatyard – formerly Everson's, has, for some time now, had planning permission to rebuild, and hope to start with the workshop, at the rear of the building, by the summer, before moving forward to demolish the front. It is all currently out for quotes and Geoff Sinton's workload is clearly not an enviable one.

Whisstock's has finally been out for public consultation, with many people returning completed questionnaires with their comments. I suggested the impact of the massive four storey block could be lessened if the east elevation was constructed in full glazing on the top floor to reflect the sky and even the roof of the Tide Mill. It is all too late to wish for 'more cum less' with the awful financial trap created by these sorts of sites being bought on huge amounts of borrowed money.

BIRDS OF THE TIDE MILL

Bee Farrell writes:

Inspired by RSPB member and Tide Mill trustee Bob Spillett, the Woodbridge Tide Mill has developed a river bird education folder, a birds checklist sheet for school and visitors, a bird talk and walk workshop programme with river bird related activities to offer to schools. Together with 10 new child-sized binoculars, reference books and a fibro-scope *Birds of the Tide Mill* has been made financially possible by an AONB Suffolk Coasts and Heaths award of £1450.



Bee Farrell, the Mill's learning and events co-ordinator worked with Bob, Simon Read, Bawdsey School and Kyson School's Rainbow Group to research and refine the offer of studying and understanding better the birds and their river habitat. Instead of a programme which is defined by knowing and naming the many birds which come to the river we focused on the importance of studying the characteristics of the habitat in scientific and creative ways.

With Simon and Bawdsey School we explored the movement of rivers and the difference that obstacles and river bank formation can have on flow. Bee worked with Miss Frost, Mrs Pack and Rainbow Group from Kyson to investigate river mud using a fibro-scope, designing 'river mud menus' for birds, making model bird feet suitable for river life, composing a Birds of the Tide Mill orchestral piece and observing birds from the Mike Weaver room-a wonderful bird hide.

Since November 2012 Bob has held two popular bird talk and walk events for beginner bird enthusiasts to share his knowledge and develop binocular use and identification skills. We officially launched the Birds of the Tide Mill programme in April and will be promoting it to schools and groups as a valuable addition to our learning programmes from next April.

WALDRINGFIELD

Neil Winship writes:

Sluice - *Noun: sliding gate or other contrivance for controlling the volume or flow of water.*

Adjective: as in 'Sluice Room' seen in hospitals ~ but let's stay with the river wall!

After a short presentation to the Waldringfield Wildlife Society on why the Environment Agency (EA) plan to reduce

vegetation, I was asked about the three sluices in our stretch. Mr. Joe Clarke wondered how often the flap valves and the drainage ditches on the landward side are freed from debris and cleaned. Fortunately they all have a phone number on their warning sign. That got me through to a sweetly spoken lass, Karen, who took details of my enquiry so she could pass them on the local EA office. (Her accent led me to ask; and yes, she was just outside Belfast.) A short while later Meredith called me from the EA in Ipswich and we confirmed the queries and why I was asking.

A few hours later Joe Rogers, a young civil engineer at EA Ipswich called back. He confirmed that the EA is responsible for clearing any screen protecting the mouth of the sluice (e.g. the big one at Kirton), through the pipe and for the outlet in to the river. That includes the flap valves, which stop most of the high tide water flowing back to the landward side. Those flaps are of heavy cast iron so are simple, long lasting and seldom get seriously blocked. 'Seriously' since silt etc is bound to prevent them sealing shut at every tide. So long as the outflow during a falling tide is much greater than the inflow during a rising tide, that should be OK.

Mr. Rogers told me that each sluice is inspected thoroughly every year and often checked again around the six-month stage. He asked that if anyone notices a blocked sluice, never to attempt DIY but please report it to the EA. That may lead to you too exchanging pleasantries with Karen and Meredith. Some of us may marvel at the money spent recently on the new fences, steps and galvanized gates etc. for the EA workers' access. Recalling the power of flowing water and the real danger, especially to children, we may be grateful to live in a land where such accident prevention is provided.

As to the drainage ditches on the landside of the wall, it is nearly always the landowner's responsibility to keep them clear. After all it is his or her land that is being protected from salt water so it can be productive. In the particular case of the Swan's Nest and Marsh Wall sluices just NW of Waldringfield, there about 56 acres of land between the river wall and the 5 m contour line. That is excluding the 20 or so low lying properties alongside Quay Lane and part of Cliff Road.

BAWDSEY QUAY

David Bucknell writes:

Bawdsey Manor have replaced the old 'steam ferry' groyne. So far this is the only groyne constructed by Sir Cuthbert Quilter to have been renewed. The sections of the groyne were brought across the river by Felixstowe Ferry Boatyard using Deben Trogen.



FELIXSTOWE FERRY

David Bucknell writes:

The Bawdsey Ferry Waiting room is taking shape. Interestingly, some of the buildings at the Ferry were built around railway carriages and on one occasion a bus. This is built around a container.



BAWDSEY FERRY

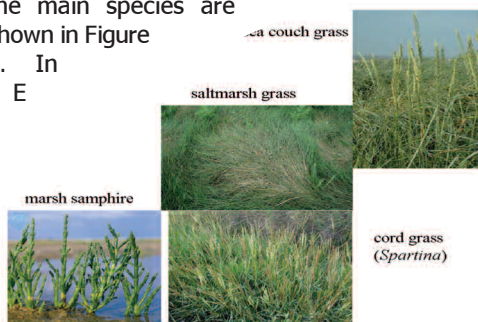
I have been asked to clarify the funding of the repairs to Bawdsey Jetty. Of the 25K repair bill, £10K was a grant from the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths AONB Sustainable Development Fund. The rest of the cost was funded by Suffolk County Council, Bawdsey Manor Estate and the Felixstowe Ferry Boatyard. (Editor.)

SALTMARSHES – FEATURES, IMPORTANCE AND CONSERVATION.

This is a brief description of saltmarshes and their importance, together with some of our research findings that overturn accepted ideas of their formation and their recent erosion.

Anyone that visits estuaries, including the Deben, will be familiar with saltmarshes, salt-tolerant vegetation growing in inter-tidal sediments. Some of the main species are shown in Figure

1. In
S E



England saltmarshes extend from high spring tide level, where sea couch grass, shrubby sea-blite and sea beet are typical, down to a flat plateau dominated by saltmarsh grass and sea purslane, but where there is high species diversity, including sea lavender (Figure 2). The marsh plateau is often excised by complex



and deep creek systems and usually terminates abruptly in a cliff at the seaward edge. Low marsh or pioneer zone species may be found below the cliff, down to high neap tide level, typically marsh samphire and cord grass. However, these low marsh plants are usually scarce or absent and the cliff is the seaward extent of the marshes. The plants show a vertical zonation of species (Figure 3) where the lower level of each is determined by its adaptation to saline water, waterlogged soils with low oxygen and high sulphide concentrations, and the upper level is determined by competition with higher species.

Saltmarshes are important habitats and most have national or international designated conservation status, including over 85% of the saltmarsh area in the UK. They are areas of high primary productivity, particularly saltmarsh grass and cord grass, which compare to tropical rain forest in the amount of plant material produced per square meter per year. The biomass remains low because these grasses continually shed old leaves. The old leaves become detritus and, directly or indirectly, food for the invertebrates of the mudflats, mostly worms, that are eaten by a wide range of wading birds and some fish, for example, bass. Saltmarshes also provide nesting sites, for example, 60% of UK population of redshank, and convenient roosting sites for wading birds when the tide covers their feeding grounds. Geese, including Brent geese in winter, feed on saltmarsh grass,

and teal and twite eat the seeds of saltmarsh plants. Saltmarshes are important nursery areas for fish; for example, bass less than one year old enter saltmarshes on the flood tide with empty stomachs and leave with them full.

Saltmarshes absorb the energy of waves crossing them, protecting sea defences from erosion and low-lying coastlines from flooding. In 1995 it was calculated that with 80m of saltmarsh a sea wall needs be only 3m high and cost £400 per linear metre but with no marsh the wall needs to be 12m high at a cost of £5000 per linear metre.

SALTMARSH FORMATION

The standard accepted explanation for saltmarsh formation is 'facilitated succession', where the low pioneer zone plants colonise mudflats, stabilise the sediment with their roots, and promote further sediment deposition by slowing the water movement. The sediment surface rises and these plants are successively replaced by higher zone species which are better competitors. Thus the saltmarsh moves seaward and gets progressively higher.

However, our research indicates that most saltmarshes are not formed where sediment rises in relation to sea level but that sea level rise (SLR) is actually the main reason for saltmarsh formation.

There are three main problems with the usual explanation for saltmarsh development. Firstly, saltmarshes are most extensive on subsiding coasts that have experienced local SLR, such as SE England (see below). Secondly, its prediction that sediment gradually rises in relation to sea level is not consistent with the wealth of evidence in the scientific literature that saltmarshes maintain an elevation that is in equilibrium with sea level, and rising sea level. This is because as sea level rises more

sediment-laden water flows onto the marsh and for a longer time on each tide, increasing the rate of sediment deposition. The marsh elevation therefore keeps pace with SLR, except for the upper marsh which cannot maintain this equilibrium as few tides reach it and then not for long. Thirdly, the seaward edge of most saltmarshes is a cliff which precludes gradual development to seaward.

We are tracing the history of saltmarshes from around the UK by taking vertical cores of sediment and examining them for microfossils. The buried plant material generally decays and cannot be used, but the shells of small animals called foraminifera are preserved, and also show a vertical zonation and are used as surrogates for saltmarsh plant zones. We have found no evidence for the usual idea that marshes develop from low to high. High and mid marshes are not underlain by sediment strata of lower marsh communities. Most saltmarsh development is because of sea level rise which causes saltmarshes to migrate inland, if this is not prevented by sea walls; where terrestrial plants are replaced by the upper marsh plants. At high rates of SLR the upper marsh develops to mid marsh to low marsh, mudflat and lastly sea bed. This happened for most of the past 10,000 years when rates of SLR were higher than they are now, and saltmarsh sediments have been detected in the southern North Sea. The rates of SLR slowed about 2000 years ago and now the sequence is only from high marsh to mid marsh which then persists as a plateau by maintaining an equilibrium elevation. The general scarcity of the low marsh species is because the rate of SLR is now both too low, so the mid marsh is not drowned to provide a habitat for the low species, and too high which prevents them from maintaining an equilibrium elevation. While the mid marsh species are large and structurally complex enough to increase the

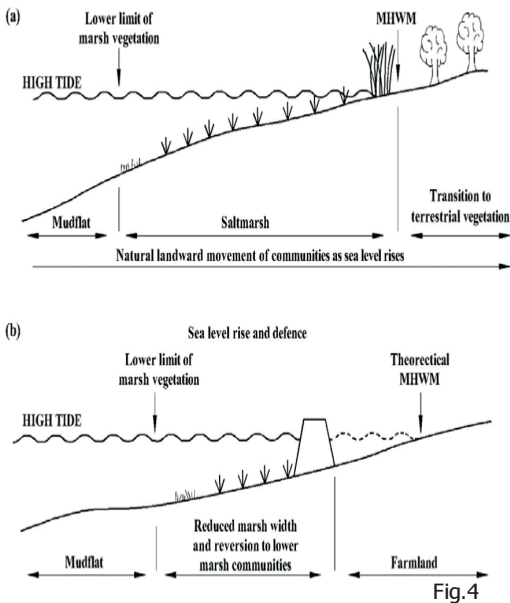
sedimentation rate, the pioneer zone species can't do this as they are small, structurally simple and annual, so they are dead over winter.

SALTMARSH LOSSES

Saltmarshes are disappearing rapidly worldwide, often because of reclamation; and there are concerns about their future with predicted increased rates of sea level rise. In SE England (Suffolk to Kent) the erosion was estimated, from aerial photographs, to be particularly severe as this area has 10% of the UK saltmarsh area but about 60% of the losses. In the Orwell, for example, 40% of the total area was lost from 1973-1988, including 74% of the pioneer zone, and a further 23% in total in the following 10 years.

The government i.e. DEFRA and its agencies, The Environment Agency and Natural England, believe the loss of saltmarsh in SE England is due to sea level rise and coastal squeeze (Figure 4). The ice that covered northern Britain until about 10,000 years ago caused it to sink, and the south and east England to rise. After the ice melted, rebound has occurred with the north, above a line roughly from the Mersey to the Tees, rising and the south sinking, particularly around the greater Thames estuary, at an average rate of about 1.5 mm per year. Their argument is that this local SLR would cause the saltmarshes to move inland but as this is prevented by the sea walls that surround this coast they cannot and become squeezed out.

There was never any evidence to support the 'coastal squeeze' explanation for loss of saltmarshes and it is wrong. Principally, it ignores the wealth of evidence that saltmarshes exist in equilibrium with rising sea level. Under the 'coastal squeeze' idea the lowest species should be lost last (Figure 4), but, to the contrary, they maintain this is where most losses occur. Furthermore,



sea level has been rising on these coasts against sea walls for hundreds of years, without regional scale saltmarsh losses until the past 50 years or so.

So why after centuries of development have the saltmarshes in the SE eroded in recent decades? One line of evidence is that in the past few decades there have been changes to the invertebrates of the mudflats and creeks. Although historical data are generally lacking, one report from the Orwell is that molluscs, mostly small clams, have been replaced by worms, mostly ragworms. There is no doubt that ragworms now dominate the mudflat invertebrate community, and a glance at the mud in Woodbridge dock, for instance, will show their burrows at densities of several thousand per square metre. The ragworms feed mostly by emerging from their burrows and grabbing mouthfuls of sediment and whatever else is there, including algae that stabilise the mud. Our research has demonstrated that ragworms also eat the seeds and seedlings of low saltmarsh plants and exclusion of the

worms in small experiments has resulted in saltmarsh development in some areas where the sediment is high enough for them (Figure 5). The feeding by ragworms also destabilises the sediment which leads to erosion of saltmarsh creeks. The creeks lose more sediment on the ebb tide than they receive on the flood and therefore get bigger causing, in a positive feedback, more and more erosion.

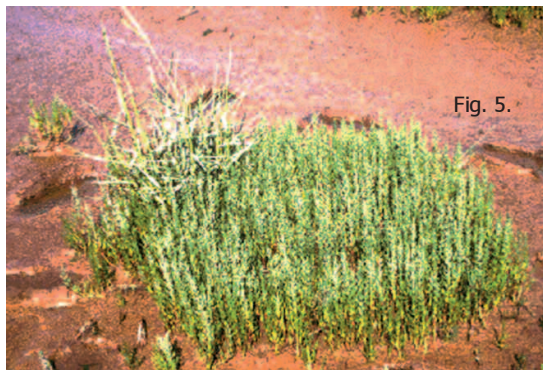


Fig. 5.

What caused these changes in the invertebrate community? One line of evidence points to the activities of man. Coastal waters are naturally deficient in nitrogen and in the past century, particularly since the end of the Second World War, we have fertilised them, from agricultural fertiliser run-off and sewage outfalls, the latter from the increasing coastal population and older houses being connected to mains sewage. One obvious sign of this nutrient enrichment is the bloom of bright green algae that may cover mudflats in summer. Our research can identify terrestrial and marine sources of nitrogen by their different stable isotopes. In inner estuaries, including the Deben at Martlesham Creek, ragworms feed on, and benefit significantly from, this fertilised higher productivity on the mudflat. In the outer estuaries, where nitrate concentrations are lower, the ragworms feed mostly on the detritus of cord grass

Spartina, which was planted around this coast in the middle of the last century to stabilise the mudflats and promote saltmarsh growth.

Common shore crabs may also have benefited in a similar way, and may also contribute to saltmarsh creek erosion by tunnelling into the banks (Figure 6) and destabilising them. Some saltmarshes are like Swiss cheese with deep and complex tunnel systems. We do not know why the crabs excavate these complex tunnels but they do cause erosion because as the tide floods into and out of them they expand in size and often the roof collapses. Therefore we may have inadvertently and indirectly caused saltmarsh erosion by increasing the population densities of ragworms and crabs.

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Figure 1. Some common plants of the low, mid and high saltmarsh.

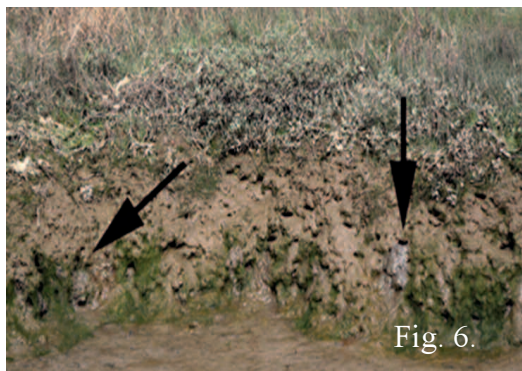
Figure 2. A saltmarsh plateau at Orfordness with saltmarsh grass and flowering sea lavender.

Figure 3. The vertical zonation of saltmarsh plant species (on a sea wall).

Figure 4. Diagram illustrating the coastal squeeze idea (from www.saltmarshmanagementmanual.co.uk)

Figure 5. A square meter of pioneer saltmarsh growing in an area where ragworms were excluded by placing a net under the surface to prevent them reaching the surface to feed.

Figure 6. Tunnels dug by the common shore crab in a saltmarsh creek bank (at Waldringfield) with two new ones arrowed.



the owner in a nearby car park and he led us down to the lake shore and then rowed us out in his dinghy to look over the boat.

We were impressed by what we saw and he suggested that we should go for a short sail. So this was our first outing in a Cornish Shrimper – a 19ft gaff rigged trailer sailor yacht, usually with tan coloured sails. It was an ideal setting to enjoy a sail in the sunshine with the backdrop of all the surrounding Lakeland Mountains and we were immediately spell bound. Later that evening we celebrated the fact that we had bought her on the spot!!

CORNISH SHRIMPERS ON THE DEBEN

I had been sailing 505 dinghies for over twenty five years and had enjoyed taking part in Deben Week each year up to 1995. After another hard week's racing Gillie declared that 'enough was enough' and that she would not be sharing the delights of a spinnaker reach stretched out on the trapeze wire anymore.

After a tricky chat it became clear that sailing in a more leisurely style was still attractive to her. It was pure chance that we were wandering around the boatyard at Felixstowe Ferry where we noticed a small cabin boat sitting on a trailer. We peered through the porthole and saw two bunks, a centreboard case and a neat layout of a small cooker on gimbals and shelves at the front of the cabin. The boat had a wide open cockpit and was fitted with an outboard engine fitted through a hole in the hull on the starboard side near the stern. We were intrigued and decided to look out for one in the magazines. It was only a week later that we found one for sale second hand being offered for a similar price to a new 505. It was sitting at a mooring on Lake Windermere and we decided to combine a walking week-end in the Lake District to celebrate Gillie's birthday and to view the boat. We met

Quite a new sailing life started which became more exciting each year. We have trailed 'Bumble Chugger' to Sweden, Denmark, Portugal, Holland, France and several times to Scotland, enjoying some wonderful sailing in beautiful surroundings. We are fortunate that we can enjoy sleeping on board, similar to camping, over several weeks without any problems. In our cruise around South England (travelling 1,200 miles) we spent six weeks on board with only one night on shore.

One of the great joys has been exploring the River Deben and other local rivers. On one occasion several of the family had sailed round to Pin Mill while my elder son, Justin, had driven round with the shore party. It was quite late before Justin and I started back knowing that it would be dark by the time we reached the Deben bar. My son was a keen board sailor and knew the layout of the Deben estuary quite well. Even so we arrived at the Woodbridge Haven buoy at 11pm close to low water and could only just make out the Martello Tower on the Golf Course. The two channel buoys were quite invisible and we had to guess where the channel lay. Inevitably we got it wrong and suddenly found ourselves aground on the last of the ebb. In what was nearly pitch black we jumped out and

tried to push her off the bank. It took us several minutes to realise which way to push for deeper water and then found the current was still quite strong pushing her back on to the sand-bank. We at last managed to get her into the channel and with the engine under full power made our way into quieter waters close to the shore. By this time it was after midnight and we convinced ourselves that the incident had not been witnessed and we would not have to admit to our mistake. No such luck – the next time I visited the sailing club I was



asked if I had enjoyed my midnight saunter on the bar!!

I think our boat was the only Shrimper on the river in 1996, which is in contrast to the situation today. There are at least a dozen on moorings between The Granary Boatyard in Woodbridge and Felixstowe Ferry. It is one of the more popular classes of small yachts and has a thriving members' association. Each year there is an International Rally. Last year nearly a hundred Shrimpers met in Falmouth from all parts of the UK, Holland and Germany. It is interesting how each area uses the

boat in different ways. At Rock, Falmouth and Poole racing is an important feature. Here, on the East Coast Shrimpers are used much more for picnics and exploring the local waters. A little racing takes place on the Deben at Waldringfield Sailing Club and an annual regatta is held at Aldeburgh in August which includes a class for Shrimpers and Norfolk Gypsies. After the demise of Deben Week the Dragonfly and Shrimper fleets perpetuated it with their own version for four years. This included racing at Waldringfield and Felixstowe Ferry and a Treasure Hunt right up to Wilford Bridge. The latter involved exploring many of the hidden creeks, which many of the local sailors had forgotten about or didn't know existed. We enjoyed barbecues at different spots on the river including a very memorable one at Methersgate organised by Andrew and Tina FitzGerald. It ended abruptly with a thunderstorm and everyone dashing for cover. The sight of Richard Smithson in Dragonfly No. 7 setting off back to Waldringfield in a force 6 was impressive!

Towards the end of our 'Deben Week' we had a tea party at the Rocks. The Shrimpers arrived first and set about boiling water on their stoves ready for the tea. The Dragonflies arrived together bringing the cakes, specially bought that day from Fitzbillies in Cambridge.



One year the Dragonflys decided, under the command of 'Admiral' Neil Cawthorn, to set up an Armada. Unfortunately news of this had leaked and they were greeted with a bit of their own medicine. Defending rockets were set off from the stern of the Shrimpers. The attacking rockets from the Dragonflys were set off from a plastic bucket and soon this became defunct when a hole was burnt through its bottom.



This year we had a memorable camping trip at the Tips, just upstream of Waldringfield. On the Saturday we had lunch with our son Jamie and family, and decided that the weather was pleasant enough to take the boats out and camp at the Tips. Jamie kept his Drascombe Dabber up at Martlesham Creek and our Shrimper, Bumble Chugger (BC), was moored on a pontoon at Granary Boatyard. We agreed to sail down river and meet up at Ramsholt Quay at 6pm to have a drink at the Ramsholt Arms. We would then sail back up river to the Tips to arrive at high water and dry out for the night. All went to plan and we enjoyed our drink in the warm sunshine at Ramsholt whilst the children and dogs splashed around in the water.

Jamie led the way to the Tips and guided us to a sandy spit rising out of a very flat

area of mud. It was 8 pm when we arrived and we allowed BC to beach herself on the sand. I knew it was close to high water but reckoned that there were still two or three inches to rise. I thought that it would be easy to get afloat the next morning, as there were four of us to help push her off. I should have looked up the tide times in the almanac which would have told us that the height of HW that night was 3.7m and in the morning would be 3.6m, a crucial difference of four inches. When we woke the next morning we were amazed to see how far away we were from the water's edge. It looked at least half a mile and we only had another hour to go before high water! We expected high water to be about 9am.

At 8.30 the water had reached the stern of BC – it was then that I realised that we had little hope of getting another fifteen inches of tide and were almost certainly marooned there for the next twelve hours. Sure enough after we all had been pushing like mad for about ten minutes Gillie announced that the water was receding. There was still five or six inches of antifouling clear above the water. We hadn't even started to move her.

New plans had to be made. Fortunately the almanac showed that the depth at HW that evening would be back to 3.7m. I remembered that friends of ours lived at Methersagate and that we might be able to borrow a spade from them. It was only a mile across the fields to their house and so by late morning we were back on the scene digging a trench around the boat.

Time always goes by more slowly when one is waiting for something and it seemed days waiting for the tide to come creeping back up the mud. At 8.30pm the water had surrounded BC but there was still three inches of antifouling showing. Nevertheless we started to rock and push the boat - to



no avail. We waited another ten minutes and tried again.

It wasn't until about 9 pm that we got any sign of movement. Then suddenly she was free!!

Moral: don't beach your Shrimper at the top of the tide!

Robin Whittle

Fond Memories of Deben Week

How sad that this wonderful event is no more! When I cast my mind back, one event springs to mind.

It was a cold, choppy and blustery morning. David Shipman was helming my Dragonfly, and I was crewing. We were to make our way up river from Waldringfield to Woodbridge for the days racing. I think that there must have been extra boats anchored near the clubhouse, so tacking up stream was not the easiest. The jib sheet cleats were a bit stiff, and I never really mastered that wonderful little 'flick' that some of the other crews seemed to do. So as the bows of a moored yacht rapidly approached, I had little choice other than to lean forward to release the sheet,

and oops, over we went – RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE CLUB HOUSE!!

The one good thing about that was, that there was plenty of help on hand. I was whisked off into someone's hut, given a hot drink and dry clothes. David, presumably, was helped to get the boat up, and back on the mooring, minus of course, all my bits and pieces, bucket, pump, bailer, etc. all gone!!

– I certainly wasn't up for hopping back in, and continuing the sail up river.

We eventually sorted ourselves and decided to make our way to Woodbridge, by car, to see how the racing was going – we had only been on the back by the club house for a matter of minutes, when I spotted MY BUCKET floating by the pontoon, so close that someone was able to grab it!!

A week or so later, Ian Bowles made one of his regular trips around the island where he often retrieved various flotsam and jetsam among which was my pump and bailer.



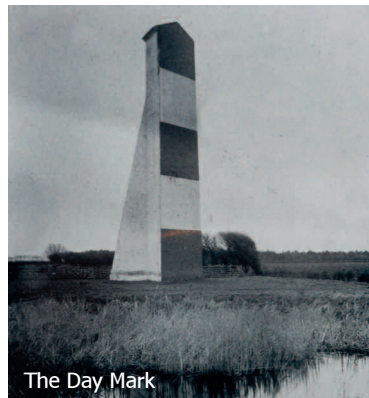
What is the expression - 'What goes around, comes around.'

Wouldn't it be great if Deben Week could do the same?

Annee Garrett

Sir Cuthbert's Fight with the Sea

When Sir Cuthbert Quilter looked out from Felixstowe across to Bawdsey, he must have envisaged the superb views he would enjoy over the knolls from his drawing room in the Manor he was about to build. We can only surmise whether he foresaw the challenge he was going to face protecting his estate from the incursions of the sea. Sir Cuthbert's 'fight with the sea' is a story of a man's determination to defend his land and property, embarking on massive constructions utilising the considerable wealth and resources he had at his disposal. The forlorn sign in front of the Manor which reads 'Danger Decaying Groynes' is a salutary reminder not only of the projects he undertook but the decline of defences once an individual no longer has a personal interest or the resources to undertake their maintenance.



The Day Mark

Sir Cuthbert (1841-1911) bought Bawdsey Estate in 1873. Although the records of the construction of his defences were lost in the various sales of the Estate which followed his death, we are able to piece together the history of the defences from the maps available to us.

Figure One shows the coastline in 1881. Two Martello Towers 'W' and 'X', are in place and there is a substantial beach and field in front of Martello Tower 'W'; Rose Cottage is well inland. The shingle beach extended to Bawdsey Quay and there was a 'Day Mark' on the land to the south of the Martello Tower. There is a shingle beach north of East Lane and Quilter had not built the sea wall between East Lane and Shingle Street. However, there has been significant erosion off East Lane point and the map shows that Quilter has built a series of groynes to protect East Lane.

In 1905 the coastline was breached to the north of East Lane and this resulted in significant flooding of Quilter's low lying land and Martello Tower 'X' was destroyed. It was presumably after this event that Quilter built the sea wall north of East Lane towards Shingle Street and this remains a significant defence to this day. A second breach washed the remains of the Martello into the sea.



Figure One

Maps in 1923 suggest that the shingle beach built up again and this may have been the result of the cyclical process in which the shingle which builds up at Weir Point at Shingle Street, eventually breaks down and is deposited in Hollesley Bay. It is thought that this may be a 100 year cycle which has resulted in the current shingle bank which encloses the lagoons.

It seems that erosion continued to the south of East Lane, and consequently Quilter in 1923, with the help of Dutch engineers, constructed what is known



locally as The Prom. This large concrete platform with a concrete apron extended over 50 meters out into the sea and formed a groyne or breakwater that restricted the flow of water down the coast.

Local residents remember that you could drive a car out on to The Prom and one resident of Bawdsey told me how she did her 'courting' on The Prom. Until recently you could see the remains of the rails of a small gauge railway which Quilter built along The Prom on which the trucks ran bringing the sand shingle and stone used in the construction of The Prom; apparently the sand was dug from what became the irrigation ponds.

After the war a coaster ran into The Prom and did considerable damage to the structure and to the groynes. Although you can still see the remains of The Prom, subsequent work by the Environment Agency has broken up some of the concrete and much of The Prom to the north of East Lane is obscured by the 'rock armour'.

Quilter over the years constructed a series of wooden groynes from north of East Lane to Bawdsey. It is estimated from the



number that are left that there must have been over two hundred groynes. Each groyne is a major construction with over 20 posts buried in the beach and over 100 boards bolted together. They were presumably constructed with no mechanical assistance. Each groyne was numbered and logged on the plan.

Vic Clouting, who worked as an engineer at the Manor and for the RAF, remembers that there were a series of Beach Gangs who installed and maintained the groynes. There was Sir Cuthbert's gang, the Catchment Board 'gang' and latterly a 'gang' employed by the Ministry of Defence. In Sir Cuthbert's time the gang regularly surveyed the height of the beach, measuring the shingle from the top of the piles. The height and line of the beach was recorded and marked in different colours on series of maps which Vic remembers seeing. If the height of the beach was decreasing, boards would be added to the groynes to increase the capture of shingle and sand; if the height was increasing boards would be removed.

Vic remembers the Catchment Board gang coming and making small repairs whenever the defences were breached. However, since the demise of the Catchment Board routine repairs have not been carried out. Vic says that much of the destruction of The Prom stemmed from minor holes which were not repaired and gradually the sea washing in and out undermined and fractured the concrete.

The beach between East Lane and Bawdsey has been seriously eroded. In 1934 the 'day mark' which was threatened with erosion was demolished; the bricks were apparently used to build the houses on East Lane. Pill boxes built during the war have fallen into the sea.

Local opinion suggests that the groynes served to maintain the beach from East Lane to Bawdsey for many years, and that it was the failure to maintain the groynes, together with the routine dredging of Felixstowe Docks, that caused the beach to decline. Some professional opinion disputes this, as much of the sediment dredged from the channel at Felixstowe is mud and stone rather than shingle. Vic also thinks that the groynes used to 'set – off' the tidal stream, which since the decay of the groynes has eroded the Dip at Felixstowe. Over the years wood from the groynes washed up on the beach and has been recycled as benches and patios in local houses.

During the Second World War the RAF constructed the sheet piling around Bawdsey Manor and built the sea defence which runs in front of the Pulmanite Cliffs to the south of the Manor, which may themselves have served to stabilise the fragile cliff.

Since 2000 the Environment Agency has worked to preserve the promontory at East Lane as a safeguard to Bawdsey Beach; although there are differing opinions as to whether East Lane is a positive or negative influence on coastal erosion. In 2010 much of the Prom was covered with 'rock armour'. In 2011 there was considerable



scouring to the north of The Prom and it was felt that this might jeopardise a section of Quilter's wall which might lead to flooding.

The scouring revealed Quilter's defences and the groyne which had been buried under shingle for nearly 100 years. They had been sculptured by the sea and made a beautiful seascape. In order to facilitate the placement of the rocks The Environment Agency 'unceremoniously' pulled out the groyne and placed rocks in front of the wall. Ironically, before they commenced the work the shingle had already returned and built up the area. There are now concerns that the hard edge of the rocks may cause scouring and further erosion to the north and this may eventually threaten the lagoons and the significant wild life habitats and important fauna and flora. This effect is also evident both the south of the Martello and at Felixstowe Ferry. The Prom continues to deteriorate and the cobbled facings are deteriorating.

In 2009 the much publicised scheme to protect the coast around Martello Tower 'W' was completed but it would appear the hard edge around the rock armour has led to continued scouring to the south. Similarly, the hard edge of the rocks seems to be associated with the erosion to the north of East Lane and currently the footpath is closed to the north of East Lane.

Are there lessons to be learned from the history of this coastline? Quilter was a wealthy landowner who could afford to do the work necessary to protect his profitable investment. He could not rely on any other agency. Sustainability is the current buzz word and Quilter's groyne was sustainable – much of the wood was grown on his estate and the work provided employment for local people. There is a view that his use of groyne maintained Bawdsey Beach and that 'rock armour' does

not fill the same function as it does not prevent the sediment from land erosion being washed away. As can be seen it may also have the unintended consequences of scouring around the hard edges of the rock.

Interestingly, an article written at the time entitled 'Sir Cuthbert Quilter's Fight with the Sea' * says that 'If the nation cares for the coastline of the country it must be prepared to share the cost of its preservation.'A Royal Commission on Coast Defence has been appointed.' This presumably led to the 'predecessors' of the Environment Agency with national responsibility to prevent flooding, albeit with clear guidelines as to the viability of different projects. Suffolk Coastal District Council takes responsibility for coastal erosion at a local level.

We have come full circle - the Environment Agency's proposals are not met with unanimous approval and funding is not available for many local projects. Until recently not one of the groyne that Quilter constructed had been maintained. Once more the burden of some defences will fall on localities and private landowners. We now have to consider local funding initiatives and partnerships to maintain defences. In the meantime we have lost much of the beach that Quilter worked hard to protect.

David Bucknell



My thanks to Gary Watson of the Environment Agency for his help with this article and to Vic and Diane Clouting for her archive of pictures. * EADT undated.

'ARTISTS AND WRITERS'

SIMON READ

'Art by Stealth'

The story of my association as an artist with Woodbridge rightfully begins in 1975 when, after completing postgraduate study at Chelsea School of Art, I rented a warehouse floor to use as a studio with three fellow ex-students at Butlers Wharf by Tower Bridge. This exotic location was our territory until August Bank Holiday Monday 1979, when it succumbed to one of those warehouse fires that were a prelude to the redevelopment of conservation areas in London's Docklands. Being young artists with very little financial credibility this disaster signalled the end of cheap warehouse studio living and the need to be resourceful again over affordable solutions.

After some research, my partner, Rosamond Conway and I went to Holland where it was possible to purchase perfectly

Rotterdam, shortened her by 30ft and sailed her to Woodbridge where we are still based.

Prior to our arrival in Woodbridge I had assumed that my work would pick up where I left off, building idiosyncratic cameras to explore the degree to which the recording process could have a more intrusive relationship with its subject than we would normally expect. Owning and coming to terms with a very large vessel gave me a totally new perception of landscape, it became possible to experience it from within as a continuous dynamic, rather than from the outside as a spectacle. This influenced an early series made using a hand driven variant upon a panoramic camera and clamping it to my work-boat to see what would happen if I took it out over the bar to respond to sea and weather conditions.

It was not long before I realised that even an eccentric picturing process has limitations against the scope of an estuary and its behaviour. This coincided with a series of projects that I became involved in during the 1990's, all of which embraced the need to be conversant with the principles of environmental management.

The first invitation in 1993 was to be artist in residence on the Upper Thames for a year. The brief was to walk and research it, write a report, develop a body of work and reflect upon initiatives for artist's commissions on the river. The context was the inauguration of the Thames Path National Trail for which the intention to use art and artists was to celebrate the idea of a linear national park.

The experience that I gained from this commission was an enhanced understanding of flood risk management

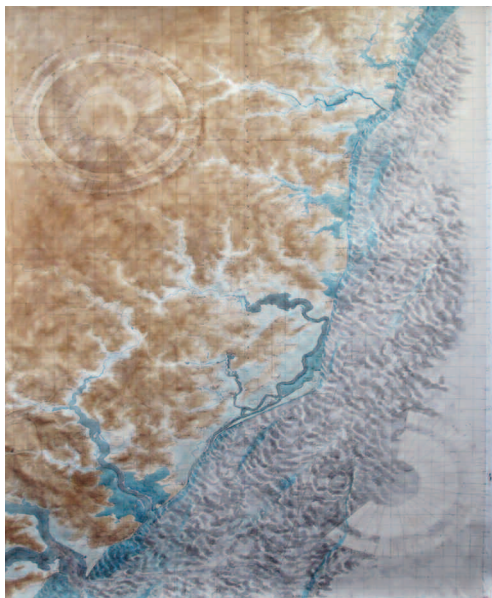


sound cargo vessels at scrap prices and in 1980 I bought the good ship Jacoba in

of the river through its weirs and sluices, alongside the delivery of a broader remit in terms of drinking water, irrigation and drainage, a biodiverse wildlife habitat, leisure amenity and enduring symbol of all that is quintessentially English; a beautiful landscape encapsulating the world of Ratty and Mole. All things considered this is a tall order and something of a miracle to achieve considering the amount of pressure for development in the Thames Valley. This balancing act serves as a beacon for me in the discussions we have about managing complexity upon our own river.

The archive for this residency is held at the River and Rowing Museum, Henley on Thames, but perhaps the most enduring result was a commission in 1996 for a work sited at the Thames Flood Barrier where the public footpath becomes a gallery beside the caissons of the barrier itself. The work is an 80 metre drawing of the profile of the river from Thames Head to Sea Reach, sandblasted into the concrete wall.

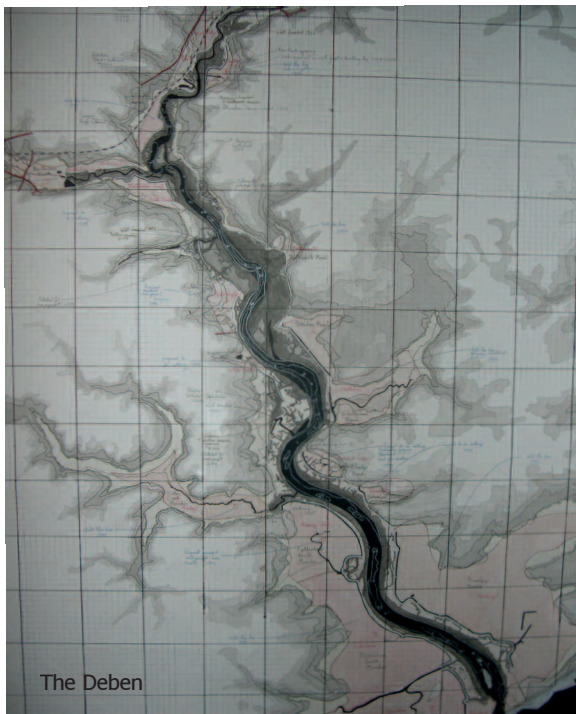
I am now so deeply immersed in estuarine and coastal systems that I wonder whether I am out of my depth and whether art even has a place. However, I have come to the conclusion that my role is much more diffuse; art need not be a destination so much as a staging post along the way towards a wider understanding of the relationship between society and natural processes. Well over a decade ago, I realised that we were facing an environmental challenge of complexity beyond the scope of our existing management strategies. The range of landscape projects that I have been involved in since the early 1990's afford me insight into institutional and governmental procedure, which together temper my own enduring interest in the cultural parameters for how we value our countryside.



Suffolk Coast

Being an artist and senior academic as well as a representative of community interest in the well being of our river and coast, I feel well placed to reflect upon change and how we adapt to it. I am an advocate for the importance of the cultural value that we place upon our own territory and the sense of ownership and responsibility that this should foster.

I am inclined to downplay overt presence as an artist in this process considering it more important that aesthetics may be sublimated in a discussion within which they could otherwise be considered inappropriate. Credibility can be a matter of knowing when to keep quiet. However, I have taken mapping as the simplest starting point to explain complexity to myself and by default to others. A map is an arena in which I can come to terms with a wide range of influences within landscape, the most effective way for me to reflect and weigh the relationship between natural and human impacts is by



Now I am accumulating information to understand the main influences upon the deterioration of the saltmarsh between Felixstowe Ferry and Kings Fleet outfall. The aim of this is to inform a "soft engineering" management scheme to arrest erosion on the site and to encourage the accretion of silt. The mapping process is just part of the reconnaissance process. It is also a discursive tool to ensure that we have as good a grasp of the site as possible before going into the logistics of project development.

This is a development from the project the RDA carried out on the Sutton Saltmarsh in 2009 (See Page 6). The drawing element ensures my focus, nourishes the imagination and can foster wider public understanding. It is vital that works are undertaken in a way that reflects a sense of community ownership of

initiatives on our river and a stake in determining its future.

Simon Read

getting them down as a drawing on a single sheet of paper.

The maps need to be large enough to accommodate a high level of detail and to allow the behaviour of the work to have its own momentum. Each map addresses a specific enquiry: from the need to establish the relationship of the Deben valley to its propensity to flood as a reflection upon the Estuarine Strategy of Posford Duvivier in 1997, to a map of the Suffolk Coast from Kessingland to Harwich Haven, made in 2010, to explore the implications of the Environment Agency Shoreline Management Plan.



RAF Bentwaters 1997 (See Page 33)

BOATS OF THE DEBEN

'Potamus'

When I walked the path from the Ferry towards Kingsfleet, I would pause to look at this green, steel, chubby houseboat surrounded by walkways and platforms with a proliferation of ropes and warps. Each time I paused I noticed something new. First, there were the decapitated heads with weird staring expressions peering out from the cabin, then the signs,



'Save the Hippo'. As I looked more closely several hippopotamus heads appeared from the mud. Here was our own 'Africa' on the doorstep of Felixstowe Ferry. As the tide receded I noticed more. First, I saw the diver with his raised hand beckoning me. He had an old fashioned diver's helmet. Then I saw his colleague just breaking the service of the mud, his hand reaching out for the boarding ladder. 'Don't forget the diver!' read the nearby notice by the boat.

This Deben Disney World intrigued me and as I walked on I imagined the eccentric person who must have originated all this. I had never seen anyone on board who could confirm my fantasies. Then one day I saw a woman sitting on the foredeck sipping wine and reading a magazine. I could not resist, and introduced myself. This was how I met Sandra and Mick the creators of 'Potamus'.

Sandra takes up the story:-

'When we got married in 1973, We had little money to spare for holidays...so we bought a second hand tent and went camping every year to a different county in England..... In 1980, we bought a VW camper van – fat and green – Mick said 'it looks like a hippo!' So it was duly called 'HIPPO'– a hippo sculpture adorned the roof, on the front was painted a hippo face, both sides each had a hippo side view and the back had a hippo bum. We now took holidays and weekend breaks in the hippo van; sometimes with the tent as well.

We used to visit friends at August bank holidays at their house boat at Felixstowe Ferry. We stayed in the hippo as there were four of them on their houseboat. In August 1984, they told us of a boat that was being sold by the Boatyard for £400. It was an old liberty boat from a ship (30' long – circa 1940's) which would have been used in an emergency to save souls at sea. Someone had turned it into a fishing vessel, but had not paid mooring fees and the Boatyard had claimed it as a bad debt.

Knowing Mick was excellent at DIY, having been known as "MR. FIX IT" at the British Museum, where he worked, Ian Moore suggested that Mick might be able to make a houseboat out of it. In November 1984, the boat was purchased and left where it was for the winter, with the other houseboats along the foreshore.

In spring 1985 we came to the Ferry to look her over. She had a small wheelhouse with open deck surrounding it. The outer deck had frilly edges where a lot of it had rusted from the rain water and was no longer connected to the hull in many places. She is a wide bellied boat and the whole of the bilge was full of water; not salt but rain water. We started to bail her out while the tide was in – Mick in the engine compartment, handing up bucket after bucket load, while I stood on deck and tipped it into the river. While waiting for the bucket to return, Mick started scratching at the rust on the hull with a screwdriver. Suddenly, we had sea water pouring in through an inch wide, round hole. While Mick's finger went in the hole, I found an old Wellington, cork and hammer. With these three items, he plugged the hole.

I persuaded him not to give up on our £400 too easily, so we made arrangements with the Boatyard to get her on to dry land and she was on a trailer soon after. Trevor, who ran the Boatyard, thought we would have her back in her berth in a few weeks, so left us near the slip. But after going over her with a chipping hammer, to get off all the rust, we had the biggest colander in Suffolk, so we were moved around the boatyard several times in the next 3 years. Again, Mick wanted to give up on her, as this EVEREST of a task appeared before him, but I wasn't about to see our £400 disappear that quickly, so cajoled him into giving it a try.

We were both working full time, so every other weekend and most of our summer holidays, we were there, in the hippo van, summer and winter, dry and wet, hot and cold, working on this rust heap. Mick, of course, did the lion's share of the work and there were three years of hard graft put into it. I helped when he started to plate the hull – me on the inside with the mole grips on



the nut, while he tightened the bolts from the outside. Nine Dexian bolts to a small plate and many more for the larger ones – we used hundreds of nuts and bolts. A lot of the nuts wouldn't fit the bolts – he got a job lot somewhere, so I sat in the sun on a log with taps and dies, making them fit. Mick used his own method of sealing the plates with cement and Ronacrete.

When he first started working on the boat, the locals thought he was mad to take on this task and they shook their heads in wonder, but he proved to them that no job was too much and all problems could be solved. With just my help, he got the rusty six cylinder Perkins engine out of the hold with just three scaffold poles and a block and tackle. He spent another £1000 on tools and materials; he built cabins for sleeping and storage places below. He solved the leaky deck problem by widening the wheelhouse from port to starboard and back to the stern, making a large space for lounge/diner and galley and this area doubles as a work shop a lot of the time. It has 360 degree windows so the views are magnificent. What was left of the outer area had had duck boards screwed into the deck with iron screws; these had rusted and

left loads of holes which had to be plugged and made waterproof. He put three layers of cement and expanding metal inside the hull to above the water line. There was concrete ballast, several inches thick, in the bilge, which he couldn't remove. This is the weak spot and the hull was thin on the outside of this. We now have a slow leak which is very hard to fix. We hoped she would have a life of 10 years and she has been in her berth for 22 years – not bad for a rust heap!



Finally, she was ready to go back into the river. Peter Brooks, whose boat was then in the boatyard, agreed that we could have his old berth. So on 4th August 1988 she was launched on a Spring tide and towed to her present berth. A seal swam in the area that day to show his approval.

What to call her? Hippo van! So why not 'Potamus' boat – she is painted Hammerite green after all. Mick had always admired the hippo and enjoyed its reference to Mother-in-Law in the old Reggie Perrin series. So 'Potamus' she was called and 'Potamus' she remains.

We had a wonderful launch party on the sea wall and one friend bought us a hippo ornament and the collection has grown from there.'

Sandra now has a collection of 52 'hippo ornaments' which decorate the panoramic stern window.

'The various figures and large hippos about the place were the brain child of Mick. "Don't forget the diver, sir." – was said by the character Colonel Chinstrap, in the war time radio program ITMA, starring Tommy

Hanley – occasionally someone walks by who is old enough to remember the catch phrase and you hear them comment on the divers. The figures in the window are just dummies, but are scary enough to frighten off the faint hearted. The hippos in the mud? Well they have to be there for the amusement of the children.'

I asked Mick if the diver's helmets were authentic. He was quick to disabuse me, telling me he had made them. 'How did you make them?' I asked 'Oh there just old Belisha beacons! '.

So now you know!

David Bucknell with Sandra and Mick Goddard

'From The Archives' My First Committee Meeting

It can only have been a moment of complete mental aberration that made me sign the form stating that I was willing to stand for the committee of the River Deben Association at the AGM.

Any idea that I could possibly replace Annie Hart was absurd, as no one could claim that I could emulate her charm, grace nor sincere greenness. My friends are never quite certain if I am green with brown edges or brown with green edges - and neither am I. Nevertheless I had signed the document and after a very strange election process I was duly approved. The election process would only work if there were more places than candidates and I soon realised that others had resisted the temptation to sign the document.

So I was summoned to my first meeting which was held in 'the small room' at the Kings Head in Woodbridge at 7.30 pm. It was a delight to find that both Adnams and Tolly were being served – a good decision by your committee. The 'small room' was a misnomer. It was quite capable of holding twenty comfortably, but only in two long straight lines on either side of the room. Those on one side had no difficulty in catching the Chairman's eye, but those sharing her side were reduced to peering forwards or backwards to be seen – reminiscent of those television shots where someone peers round the edge of the lens. I soon realised that 7.30 was meant only as a guiding figure.

We pursued a fairly circular course round the agenda, often returning to where we had been before. A fundamental problem was whether we wanted to encourage people to use the Deben, or whether our aim should be to keep them away. But it was clearly apparent that we did want as many people as possible to join the River Deben Association. Since the aim is 'to

represent and reconcile the interest of all concerned with the future of the river Deben and its environs.' The Association must be capable of responding to the concerns of its members.

At this point the, the treasurer knocked over his beer. We were in the midst of a discussion on how to remind certain members that their subscriptions had not been renewed, and he was carried away with his eloquence. I must say that the reaction of the committee (and myself) was disappointing. We all watched him dabble ineffectively with his handkerchief until it was soggy mess, whilst we kept our own handkerchiefs firmly in our pockets, and it was quite a time before the secretary had the bright idea of getting a towel from the bar.

I was privileged to be sitting next to the past Chairman, and was surprised that when any dates were discussed he produced a somewhat battered copy of the East Coast tide tables. Glancing over his shoulder, I saw that certain days were ringed, and that when future meetings were arranged, they were also ringed. He explained somewhat cryptically, that this was in order to arrange his sailing days, but it looked to me as if every day was ringed, and I was left somewhat aghast at the thought that he would never know what each ring meant and he might go sailing when the next committee meeting was called.

Musing away, I was suddenly startled by someone who regretted that Anglian Water had not imposed a hose pipe ban in the region. I could not believe my ears. My love of the river Deben seemed in direct opposition to my gardening

interests, and a cold sweat began to break out. Fortunately, no one took the idea any further - otherwise it might have been my last committee meeting.

Shortly afterwards the meeting was closed (on time), and I left full of admiration for all those who are working so hard to look after your interests on and around the river Deben, and hoping that my small contribution might be of some help to the Association in its praiseworthy task.

Michael Atkins

River Deben Association Newsletter – Spring 1992

CORRESPONDENCE

At the Ferry

Peter White writes:

I wish to draw your attention to some errors in the latest edition of the River Deben Association magazine "45 Autumn 2012".

I believe the Martello tower sketch by Margaret Wyllie to be 'U' Tower, which is located within the hamlet of Felixstowe Ferry. There is no Martello tower in Bawdsey, unless

the one at East Lane point can be considered as such.

The person at the helm of the ferry is not Charlie the "Hook" Brinkley. It is in fact his son, also named Charlie. Standing behind Charlie is Willie Little. Charlie Brinkley junior ran the ferry for many years after the Second World War. He also specialised in trawling for shrimps and latterly pair trawling for sprats. The Little family were a fishing family based in Felixstowe and they specialised in whelk fishing. The ferry boat in the picture was called "Late Times" and was built by CH Fox & Son of Ipswich. Charlie subsequently had two other such craft built, both by Felixstowe Ferry Boatyard. They were called "Odd Times" and "Our Times".

When Charlie retired, Robert his son took over and ran the ferry for a few years



The ChainFerry- 'Lady Quilter'

The original ferry of any consequence was a chain ferry. This was commissioned by Sir Cuthbert Quilter, the owner of Bawdsey Manor and it could carry motor cars. Hooky Brinkley ran the chain ferry from its inception through to its end and this covered a period between the two World Wars.

When the chain ferry ceased to run, Hooky Brinkley had a motor boat built to continue the foot ferry service. It was called "Surprise", allegedly named because the two principal families at Felixstowe Ferry, the Newsons and the Watts were surprised that Old Charlie had the money for such a project!

During the Second World War, the Air Ministry ran the ferry, as they had a large number of personnel employed in Bawdsey Manor and its surrounds. After the War, the ferry was run by Maurice Reed, whose son Steven is now assistant to the harbour master John White. Following Maurice on the ferry came Hector Horne who was married to Dot (nee Newson). Barrie White, John's father, was also contracted to run a ferry for the Air Ministry during the late 1950s and this was run separately from the public foot ferry. John White also ran the ferry for a few years following his retirement from the Felixstowe Ferry Boatyard. Currently the licence to run the ferry is held by Andrew Moore, the proprietor of the Felixstowe Ferry Boatyard.

Peter White

After Port Elgin

Denzil Cowdry writes:

Dear Leigh,

Very many thanks for presenting my Dad's experiences aboard Port Elgin and Port Patrick. He and you write rather well. Did I tell you that he later went into yachting and gained a couple of top-notch jobs, as Chief Officer of the 'Flying Cloud' in the 20-30's, a large square rigged yacht, owned by the Duke of Westminster (three ago) and then, after the 39-45 war, was skipper to T.O.M Sopwith in 'Philante 1V', a tiny yacht in comparison to the pre-war predecessor which was sold to the King of Norway, 2500 tons! My Army life was a piece of cake in comparison.

You are doing a great job. Well done!
Regards, Denzil.

Family Memories of the Deben

John Castell writes:

Dear Mr. Belcham,

The RDA Newsletter arrived in this morning's post. Already I have read it from cover to cover! This, I assure you, is a record! Thank you and your contributors so much for this interesting and informative booklet.

As a small boy, I lived with my mother close by Martlesham Airfield, where my father was a specialist in the Rolls Royce Merlin aero engine.

I never remembered him, as he was posted abroad when I was 18 months old. Sadly, he was captured in Singapore, taken to Jarva, and thence to Ambon in Indonesia, where he died, (together with 75% of the British POWs who were taken there to build an airstrip for the Japanese). My father was from Beccles, where his father was an engineer of some note.

My mother was from the Broads, and when she went to work as a domestic servant in Beccles, her father gave her a 14ft. skiff which she used to travel home on her few

free weekends. I believe that my mother and father used to do much of their "courting" on the boat - they both having a great love of boats and rivers.

When my father was stationed at Martlesham Heath, the skiff came too, and was kept at Robertson's Boatyard. Although my mother was crippled, she managed to ride a bicycle, (but only just!), and she used to take me - sitting on a cushion on the carrier - to spend time on the river in the skiff. Later, I was able to ride my own bike alongside my mother, and I recall the struggle we had to lift the bicycles over the "kissing gates" at the railway level crossing. My mother used to row across the river to a sandy beach - slightly down river from Woodbridge - where we used to swim and picnic. She always forgot to move the boat as the tide went down, so we had a struggle to get the boat across the mud and back into the water, and then there was the hard row back against the tide!

I was taught to row with one oar sitting beside my mother, and I recall that rowing seemed to come more naturally to me than riding a bicycle! I still remember many of our trips on the Deben, and the "great" times we had! My mother died six years ago - aged 100!

Sorry to bore you with "tales of my childhood", but I do so by way of explanation of my enduring love of the Deben, and hence my joy in reading the RDA Newsletter. My wife and I will try hard to come to the RDA Autumn Meeting on 9th November.

Thank you again for making my morning so enjoyable!

With kind regards,

John Castell

The Round the Island Race

Thirteen years ago our so-in-law Dominic Mckay and Liz Kennedy started what we call 'The Round the Island Race' - the island being in the river Deben, opposite the sailing club. It is for dinghies with just a mainsail. We started with about three or four entries and this year we have seven entries.

We have a trophy which has all the past winners on. This year, Charlotte Mythen won, she is Liz Kennedy's niece, and she was handed the trophy by our grandson, Joseph Mc Kay who won last year, and then got down to the serious stuff of tea and cakes.

The two who thought this up, Liz and Dominic, have won the race on various occasions, but we have more youngsters entering, so Liz and Dominic might find it a bit more difficult to be the winners. Our photo shows the entrants as they assemble for the start of the race in August 2011.

Kit Clark



Origins of the RDA - RAF Bentwaters - Simon Read's painting.

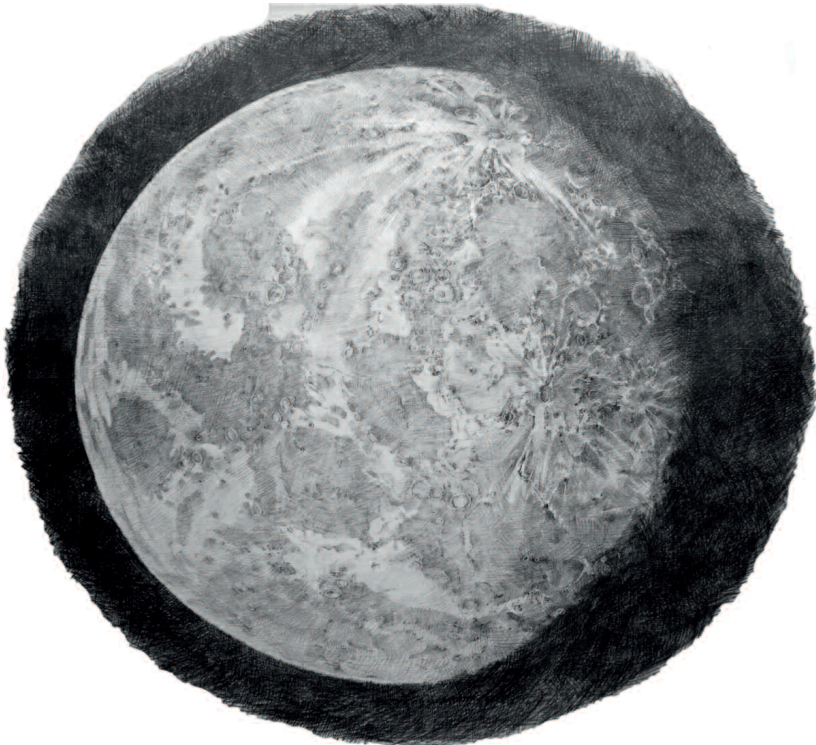
(From Page 25)

RAF Bentwaters, near Woodbridge, was built during World War 2 for the USAF, primarily as a casualty airfield to which damaged aircraft could be diverted. After the war it remained in American hands until the end of the Cold War. After a period of uncertainty a private investor put in for planning permission to set up a civil airport. Although this was consistent with the national policy to alleviate pressure on Heathrow and Gatwick by setting up more regional airports, it was inconsistent with the local plan.

I was deeply involved in a campaign to oppose the plan and as a part of this I decided to make a drawing/map of the site to explore its landscape in the past up to its character at the time of the closure of the military facility and to think about how it might be used should we be successful and the airport bid fail.

The outcome was that we won the case, but there was very little interest in seeking any alternative use for the site other than light industrial, agricultural and a source of hardcore for the building industry. In this way, the longest runway in Europe is slowly being dismantled.

Simon Read



Light reflecting off a dark surface - Gibbous Moon 1992 Simon Read



River Deben Association

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Friday 26th April 2013 7.30 pm.
Woodbridge Community Hall

The AGM will be followed by a talk:

Drilling Under the Deben and Martlesham Creek

A speaker from East Anglia Offshore Wind, main contractor for the East Anglia ONE Offshore Windfarm, talks about the engineering and geology involved and the mitigation measures employed to minimise the impact on river users and wildlife, ashore and afloat.

Refreshments