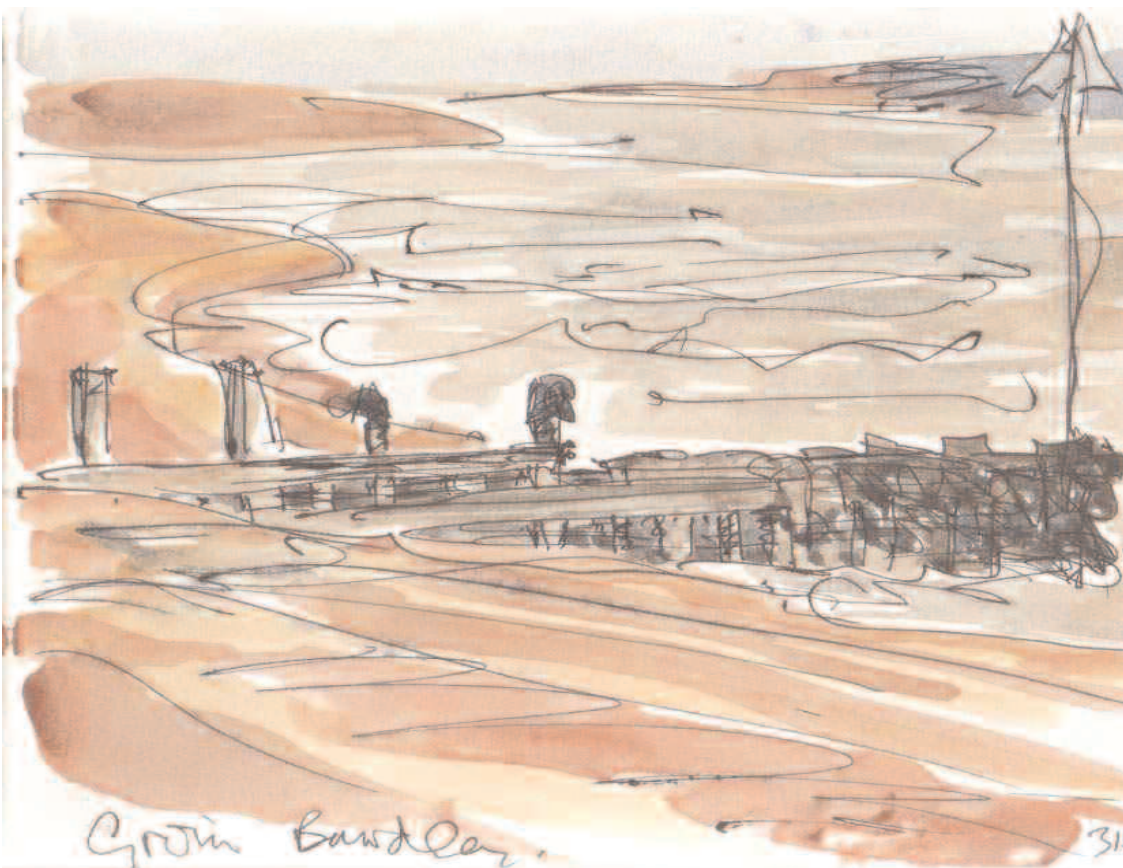


The Deben



45 Autumn 2012

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Officers and Committee
April 2012**

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The DEBEN

Autumn 2012

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(Cover ‘Bawdsey Groynes’- Margarte Wyllie)

EDITORIAL

Reading the summary of the comments on the survey one is reminded of why so many people love the Deben and want it to remain the same.



One of the joys of the Deben is that it has not been 'sanitised' or 'domesticated'. There are few signs and notices telling you what to do and what not to do. There are few 'interpretation' boards suggesting what you should see and what you should experience.

You explore the Deben and discover it for yourself in so many ways off and on the water. Your experience of the Deben is always new and fresh, changing with the light, the tide and the seasons. It is not prescribed, it is not someone else telling you what to experience, it is an experience which is unique to you and specific to your interaction with the environment.

Similarly, the Deben has a timeless quality and as we shall read in this edition people and families have a connection with the river over the years and they keep coming back – re-connecting with the river but experiencing it anew each time.

Many 'wild' environments have been exploited and turned into what amounts to theme parks. They have lost the qualities the Deben still retains.

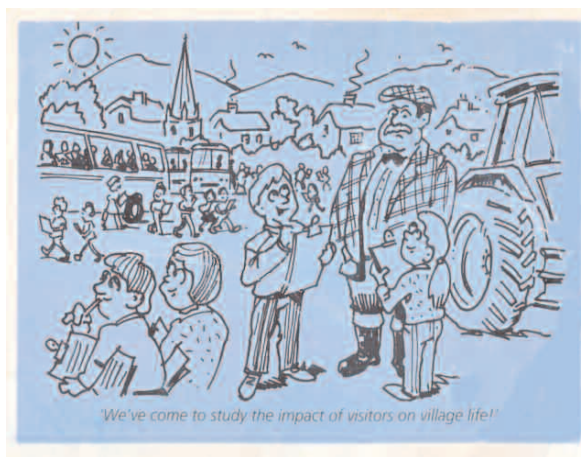
In the coming debates and discussions about the future of the Deben we should strive to preserve these qualities. We do not have to enhance and improve the 'visitor experience'. The Deben can be allowed to speak for itself and the visitor can discover this 'voice' for themselves.

In the spirit of moving the debate forward Robert Simper has provided a personal view of some of the issues which need to be addressed if we are to conserve and protect the Deben. Anne Moore continues her walks around the Deben with her walk around Ramsholt, combining it with history anecdote and folk lore. Leigh has taken extracts from Frank Cowdry's diaries and crafted a gripping account of some of his adventures on square rigged ships. Margaret Wyllie is our featured artist and there is a brief introduction to her work and in particular her 'conceptual art'. Judy Clements begins what I hope will be a series of pieces on the history of Bawdsey Quay with her recollection of her visits to her grandmother who lived on the quay.



CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Several years ago I flew the length of the river (in an aeroplane!), and for a few brief minutes had a bird's-eye-view from Woodbridge to Felixstowe Ferry. I hope that the following paragraphs can similarly provide others with an overview of Deben with respect to recent and projected developments along the river from Wilford Bridge to the sea.



Tourism: Several have expressed concern that proposed new housing developments such as Adastral Park will significantly increase the number of tourists on and along the river. Efforts by some organisations to “market” the area are likely to have a similar outcome. Our Autumn Open Meeting (see back cover) will address that concern and clarify what steps are being taken to protect the character of the Deben.

Saltmarsh: Through Simon Read, the RDA has close involvement with the Deben Estuary Partnership's Saltmarsh Group, which is currently engaged in restoring an area of degraded saltmarsh at Falkenham. The RDA is also initiating a research project, headed by James Skellorn and Simon Read, designed to clarify the causes of saltmarsh degradation, and to determine which of these is a significant factor at various locations along the river. Dr Rob Hughes' thought-provoking address on the subject at our April AGM has served as a catalyst for this research.

Moorings: Last spring's survey of river users by the RDA highlighted a perception that the number of moorings on the river is increasing to an unacceptable level. The Association plans to convene a meeting of Fairway Committee representatives to determine the total number of moorings, discover the constraints under which each committee operates, and clarify the policy adopted by each.

Siltation/dredging: The Deben Estuary Partnership is trying hard to discover what constraints, if any, will be imposed when the new Marine Management Organisation grants licences for dredging. An area of particular interest is the disposal of spoil, which, if carried out carefully, could benefit the restoration of saltmarsh. Another is the possible impact of plough dredging on siltation.

Quiet Lanes: It is considered most unlikely that funds will ever be made available for filling the gap in the river wall between Waldringfield and Martlesham Creek. The alternative route for walkers now involves a mile or two on narrow, metalled roads also used by motor traffic. Neil Winship, together with Waldringfield Parish Council, is looking at the benefit of those roads being given the new designation of Quiet Lanes, with traffic encouraged to use the safer route through Waldringfield Heath.

Windfarm cabling: Power from the East Anglia ONE offshore wind farm is to be brought ashore at Bawdsey en route underground to join the National

Grid at Bramford. The cable will pass under the Deben at Green Point and under Martlesham Creek. Dr Therese Coffey, our MP, has discovered that the crossings are likely to be made during the sailing season rather than the wildfowl breeding season, so the RDA has asked to work with the contractors in mitigating the impact of their work on river users. Let's hope this won't interfere with events like the Felixstowe Ferry Youth Sailing or during a national championships hosted by Felixstowe Ferry SC!

Environmental project: We are in discussion with others over a proposal for a competition for the best Deben-based environmental project for children and young people. As well as being of benefit to the river as a whole, it might even lower the average age of our membership!

Deben Estuary Plan: Publication of this plan by the Deben Estuary Partnership, replacing the Environment Agency's shelved Deben Estuary Strategy, is likely to be early next year. Many members will already have been involved in the local consultation events targeting Parish Councils, owners of waterfront properties, and others affected along both sides of the river. The findings of our online survey of river users have been analysed and incorporated in the plan, which will inform policy-making by statutory and other bodies (including planning authorities) in relation to the Deben, ashore and afloat, for years to come.

Waldringfield Boatyard CIC: News of the attempt by a Community Interest

Company to purchase Waldringfield Boatyard for the community can be found elsewhere in this magazine. The RDA has kept abreast of discussions from the beginning, and had provisionally pledged to purchase shares in the company

Whisstocks: There has been huge support for the proposal that the Whisstocks Project works closely with the developers for the former Whisstocks site in Woodbridge. Preliminary indications are that the project would fit well into the existing waterfront, would satisfy the planners, and would provide significant benefit to, and facilities for, the community. The RDA has contributed financially to the Whisstocks Project and fully supports the proposal.

Adastral Park: The proposed housing development at Adastral Park, Martlesham Heath is part of the SCDC Local Development Plan Core Strategy. Local opposition to the plan has led to an Examination in Public, which is continuing. The RDA has consistently argued that more effective measures to protect the development's impact on the Deben valley were required.

Bawdsey jetty: We have welcomed the repair of Bawdsey jetty and the agreement which has enabled the normal ferry service to resume.

Speeding/byelaws: Over a year ago, a proposal that police officers afloat on "jet-skis" (or PWC – Personal Watercraft) to enforce the byelaws, especially in relation to speeding, was rejected by the majority of river users.

After many years personally trying to tackle the problem, supported by the RDA committee, I reluctantly came to the conclusion that no further progress would be made until things became so bad that much louder and stronger voices than mine would prevail. I detect that we may have reached that point, and will be happy to pass the baton – together with 10 years of associated paperwork - to others!

Sewage disposal: Another problem has just surfaced – sewage disposal from yachts.

Maritime Woodbridge: The RDA had a display stand at the recent Maritime Woodbridge event. It was an excellent time of networking with other river-related people and organisations, and of hearing of others' interests and concerns. New members were signed up, too.

Forum: Invitations to the RDA's very popular annual Forum for all river-based organisations will soon be mailed. This is always an opportunity for sailing clubs, fairway committees, wildlife groups and others to raise issues of concern to them and to learn of developments initiated by statutory and voluntary bodies that could affect them. The Forum will be from 9.30am to 12.30pm on Saturday 24th November at Woodbridge Cruising Club.

Chairman: We still need to find someone willing and able to stand as Chairman when I step down in April 2013 after my statutory 3-year stint. When I took over in 2010, it was with a degree of trepidation and a sense of inadequacy. But being Chairman is a unique opportunity to make a real difference on and along the river, and I have found great fulfilment in this. If you feel you're already too busy, you're probably just the person – it has often been said, if you want a job done well, ask someone who's already busy. And we could do with a few more committee members, too.

Leigh Belcham
Chairman



NEWS FROM THE HARDS

WHISSTOCKS: now we are making real progress!



In August the Project Team published proposals based on ongoing discussions with FW Properties, the developers for the Whisstocks site, for a “compromise” approach with significant elements of community space (including a large Community Boat Shed), alongside retail, catering and holiday accommodation. Copies went to over 550 people including Whisstocks Project supporters and members of Woodbridge and Melton Riverside Action Group. Of the 50 written replies 96% were in favour or strongly in favour of pursuing the proposed way forward. Many people, whilst supporting the principles of a compromise approach, also raised questions and concerns. You can see details of the proposals, and the responses to consultation on the Whisstocks Project website at

www.whisstocksproject.co.uk. The “Frequently Asked Questions” page starts to address the points people are picking up – but in many cases the answers will only become apparent as discussions on a detailed planning application progress.

At Maritime Woodbridge in September, dozens of visitors came forward with positive comments and suggestions.

Proposals to relocate the Town Museum on the Whisstocks site are gathering strength. The museum wants to occupy the building that would be in front of the Community Boat

Shed in the proposed development.

The Project Team are also looking at ways to include facilities for an activities centre on the site – shared between the Museum, the Tide Mill and the Community Boat Shed – so that visitors and organised groups can engage in the many different aspects of Woodbridge heritage through on-site IT, talks and presentations.

At the same time, we are moving forward plans to build a full size, working replica of the Sutton Hoo Anglo Saxon ship as the first project in the Community Boat Shed. We are also looking at potential to focus on maritime heritage and traditional skills not just during the three to five year period of the Sutton Hoo ship build as a permanent purpose for the

Community Boat Shed and linked, as part of wider education and community activities, to the museum, Tide Mill and other local interests – such as Scouts

Community interests on the site would be encompassed in a “Woodbridge Riverside Hub”, around the community space in front of the existing shed pulling together the Tide Mill, the Community Boat Shed, the Town Museum, the water frontage, the slip, and Sutton Hoo.

This proposal is quite a step from the original concept of a re-born working boat yard, creating jobs and all the bustle of a normal yard. But it gives a clear sense of purpose to the whole site, supports rather than competes with existing marine business, and above all could be achievable despite the tough economic times.

You can keep up-to-date through the Whisstocks Project web site, and contribute your views on any aspect of the proposals via the open forum on the site, by email to <mailto:info@whisstocksproject.co.uk> or post to Whisstocks Project, Sun Wharf, Deben Road, Woodbridge IP12 1AZ.

Malcolm Hodd

Robertson's

The wet summer has not helped us but we have been busier than usual in June, July and August. We have had the 50' James Silver motor yacht Islanda on the slipway for mainly cosmetic work to topsides, varnish and for deck work. In the workshop we have made a new 52' mast for the gaff ketch Black Rose. Constructed from

Clear Douglas Fir this dominated the workshop for a couple of months starting from measuring the old rotten spar, through machining the timber, scarfing, glueing, shaping and finally, stepping.

We have also repaired the lifting keel on a 39' Alden sloop, built a new rudder stock and hangings for Dusmarie, removed and refastened the ballast keel on the 33' Hillyard Margo and completed a sprayed Awlgrip paint job.

Presently in the workshop is Reverend John Waller's wooden motorboat "Jesus" whose deck and wheelhouse are being repaired and the 1925 Hillyard "Marjorie" continues to progress gradually.

Richard Hare's "Kepple" will be coming in to the workshop soon for work to her treadmaster deck and the Orford ferry landing craft Guinevere will return to our big slipway for a much needed refit. Preceding her will be Lady Florence and then Sun Cloud.

So, plenty going on.....long may it continue...!

Mike Illingworth

Notes from Waldringfield Hard

Waldringfield Boatyard is sold subject to contract, which according to the agent, is “due to be exchanged next month” (October 2012). Until then the buyer understandably wishes to remain anonymous so WBYCIC is most probably ‘out.’ Meanwhile it is

understood that he and his family hope to own the yard for many years and to run it as a family business that will be really beneficial for the village as well as the boating communities.

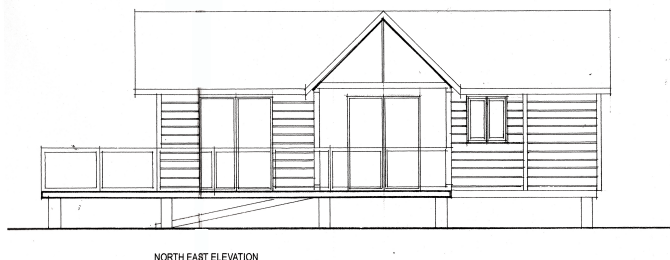
As the initiator of the WBYCIC and six-year customer of the yard, I personally welcome this and offer my septuagenarian support. Not least more time for sailing, grandchildren and the Quiet Lane project mentioned elsewhere.

And many readers will rejoice that our widely admired, nonagenarian Deben artist and sailor, Joe Lubbock, is producing his 14th book. Entitled "Landfall" this will feature watercolours and prose inspired by the countryside and rivers of Suffolk. Whereas his previous books have been individually printed and bound as 'collectors items', this one is being commercially produced and will therefore be more affordable. Planned as a limited edition of 100 however, anyone with an existing or potential love of Joe's art may wish to register their interest via www.jglubbock.com : those who eschew computers are welcome to phone his daughter Catherine Jennings on 01277 821078,

FELIXSTOWE FERRY

Planning Permission has been granted for the Ferry waiting room. It is proposed that the old container will be refurbished with wood cladding to function as a waiting room for Ferry

passengers and provide refreshments during the Summer. It will be located between the old and the new slipway and construction has started.



BAWDSEY QUAY

After a period in which ferry passengers were landed on the beach in the traditional manner, agreement has been reached with the Bawdsey Manor. The jetty has been repaired with a grant from SCDC and the ferry ran through the Summer.

A QUIET LANE TRIAL NEAR THE DEBEN?

Breaches in the river wall, as Deben walkers will know, exist between Martlesham and Waldringfield and between Waldringfield and Hemley. They happened in 1939 and 1933 and are about 75 metres wide. It would cost a great deal repair or bridge either, as the wall ends would need strengthening first. And if funds became available, DEP and EA studies show it would be better to strengthen defences just above Felixstowe Ferry to prevent greater damage upstream.

Some ramblers are frustrated by the breaches but I am told far more have

asked for those areas to be left tranquil. The RDA's own survey last Spring found over 60% of 193 respondents often walk and 75% watch birds. Most relevant to this article is that of 185 respondents to Question 9 about access, over 80% indicating that they are happy with things as they are; but of 70 comments, a number expressed a desire for continuity of footpaths and extended walks.

Alternative ways to the breached walls, while about 1 km away from the Deben, are on higher ground so offer superb views. The Hemley to Waldringfield bridleway is closed to vehicles but the Martlesham to Waldringfield by-road is not; it is also Suffolk Coastal Cycle Route 41. The great majority of drivers using that by-road are thoroughly considerate of pedestrians, riders and cyclists; but sadly a small proportion do not abide by the Highway Code's "Drive at a speed that will allow you to stop well within the distance you can see to be clear" and "You should always reduce your speed when sharing the road with pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders." Pedestrian and cyclists are not permitted on motorways and sensibly avoid A roads, so it seems only fair to share the minor roads and lanes. One Waldringfield respondent suggested walkers should stick to footpaths but those do not always link up in the way that pavements and pedestrian crossings do in towns; and discontinuity is even more marked with bridleways.

The proposal for a Quiet Lane trial using Department for Transport

approved, unobtrusive signs, arose from that need for a safe and enjoyable alternative route. The paramount aim is to promote considerate and safe roadway sharing plus conservation of rural tranquillity; it is NOT simply traffic and speed reduction. Suffolk has been said to be timid over Quiet Lanes, but current indications are that the relevant Suffolk councils and the AONB Unit will now welcome a trial with a possible view to a wider network if benefits are shown. Fortunately the proposed trial Quiet Lane has a better motor route past the Moon & Sixpence and Waldringfield Heath crossroads; it is just 10% further but is two-way for most of its length and so is usually quicker for motor vehicles than the by-road.

Opportune: The new Road Safety Minister has just launched THINK! CYCLIST, a new campaign to make 'Cities fit for Cycling' that he hopes will build on the legacy of our superb Olympic and Paralympic cyclists. Since 80% of Britons live and work in towns, that urban focus is entirely understandable. Could it be that the need to provide anxiety-free walks and rides near the Deben offers a fine opportunity for a parallel rural campaign that could lead the way for our lovely AONB?

Your views please: Waldringfield Parish Council is surveying residents' views and the East Anglian Daily Times of 28 September's electronic report included a poll. (You may still vote in that electronic poll at http://www.eadt.co.uk/news/poll_calls_for_quiet_lane_trial_in_suffolk_countryside_1_1530666) It would be wrong

to pre-empt results of the surveys and that poll, although it is fair to say there is enough widespread support to date to carry on while noting 1) anxiety that driving on the by-road might be significantly curtailed, 2) none want garish signs, 3) beware shifting a problem from one lane to another, and 4) it may be futile to even try to change the habits of irresponsible drivers. A small number assert there is no problem, but that seems to contradict RoSPA's statistics www.rospace.com/roadsafety/adviceandinformation/highway/rural_roads and a similar number of respondents who say there is an issue.

It is notoriously difficult to assess the numbers of walkers, riders and cyclists who have or would avoid the by-road due to anxiety and it will probably be equally difficult to measure benefits if a Quiet Lane trial goes ahead. So please let me have your views with any reports of your experiences (good as well as bad) that would help to justify (or not) the signs and to shape (or stop) a campaign.

Neil Winship, neil@alpheco.co.uk or Sandcliff, Waldringfield IP12 4QR

VIEW FROM THE RIVER BANK - A PLAN FOR THE DEBEN.

RIVER DEBEN

The tidal River Deben extends some sixteen km from Felixstowe Ferry, where it flows out into the sea. Inland it runs from Ufford past Bromswell and Woodbridge. It is a very attractive

estuary heavily used for leisure boating and widely used by the public as an area to walk and has considerable wild life habitats that are typical of the area. The Deben Valley is the source of considerable local employment with agricultural and commercial maritime enterprises that depend on the tidal water and the adjoining fresh water marshland.

MISSION STATEMENT

At the initial public meeting at Sutton in April 2012 of all the stakeholders of the River Deben, leisure activities and commercial interests, it was unanimously agreed that everyone wanted the Deben to stay as near possible to the present state. At the same time it was recognized that with the population in the area rapidly increasing this was going to be difficult to achieve. Any plan for the future would be aimed at keeping the Deben as it is.

WILD LIFE

Two main issues with wild life on the Deben are the maintenance of the salt marsh and the protection of the fresh water marshland.

As the river changes course salt marsh erodes in some places and builds up in others. The salt marsh are always at the level of the average high tide level and have risen since the originally walling of the grass marshes, mostly in late medieval and Elizabethan periods. As the sea level rises the salt marsh continues to rise, so the loss in a few places must be due to other causes. For some reason the Deben salt marshes are badly eroding in places. No independent research has yet been



is easily achievable for the foreseeable future. In the past, every century has seen at least one abnormal 'surge tide', 1953 being the last one. When these surge tides happen, land, homes, business premises and

done into the causes of the loss of salt marsh, but the most likely causes are the change in the course of the river, loss of vegetation and shore crab burrows. When the reason for the loss is established, any practical course to prevent this happening will be a challenge for the future.

The Deben has been the site of some experimental bird habitat protection projects. With marsh harriers firmly re-established in the Deben valley and bitterns making increasing visits and probably soon be nesting here, increasing the size of fresh water reed beds would be desirable. Possible sites would be Martlesham Creek, Waldringfield, Sutton, and Ramsholt. These could be modelled on similar reed beds on the Suffolk Coast with car parks and walkways which the public would be requested to keep to.

FLOOD PROTECTION

To the people, industry and wild life in the Deben valley and adjoining countryside, protection from flooding is the most important aspect for future planning. Even with sea level rise this

wild life habitat will be flooded. Although it looks like total devastation, the countryside recovers quickly and within a few years there is no sign of flooding. The Deben people are aware of this and anyone living in the area has to accept it.

The key to the whole Deben community and wild life's future is to maintain the present mouth and the land on either side. Without these a whole piece of the Suffolk coast will simply go into the sea. If the Bawdsey Manor peninsula is allowed to go into the sea, which is steadily happening at the moment, then Bawdsey Ferry, Felixstowe Ferry and the golf course will also go into the sea and new massive sea defences would have to be build along the new sea front at Old Felixstowe. There is no long term saving by not defending the land on either side of the Deben mouth. If the hamlets at the Deben mouth are lost then more building will have to take place as replacements The loss of coastal land will lead to a double loss of countryside inland.

The other danger is that if land along the Deben becomes flooded, the water flow in, and out, of Deben will increase. The increased flow would mean that the whole river mouth would have to be piled with steel sheets, but it is extremely doubtful even then if this would stop erosion for long. A clear policy statement from the Environmental Agency is needed.

Erosion is happening very slowly and if it is not controlled it will reach a point that it couldn't be controlled. A vital part of the estuary's future management is not allowing the water flowing into the Deben from the sea to increase.

The key to maintaining the estuary in its present form is the maintenance of the river walls that prevent the fresh water marshland from being flooded by tidal waters. To allow the tidal estuary to become enlarged, even on a small scale, would have dramatic effects on the estuary. The heightening of river walls on the Deben has already been begun and low points of the river walls have been identified by the Environment Agency. Over the decades this must continue.

PUBLIC ACCESS

The aim with access is to make the countryside and navigable river available to everybody. At the same time this should have minimal impact on the needs of the wild life, commercial activities and the lives of the people living in the area.

The key to access is car

parking. In 2012 the parking at Felixstowe Ferry and Waldringfield was inadequate. While the parking at Woodbridge, Bawdsey Ferry and Ramsholt were under strain. Any additional car park should be sited back from the river, out of general view, but not too far from the estuary. Parking at Sutton Hoo seems a good model where it is sited away from the river, but within reach by an attractive path.

At Woodbridge and Melton the river walls have already been heightened and the public footpath greatly improved and this seems a model for the future. Even these paths will have to be heightened again in about fifty years.

The footpaths are, in places, also used by horse riders and motor cycles. Because of the wild life, motor cycles should be banned while horse riding, because of the damage it does to surface, should be curtailed in areas which have not been given a hard surface.



LIESURE BOAT ACCESS

Mooring Committees, who rent the river bed from the Crown Commissioner, all have a policy of not allowing the moorings to increase, but in practice the pressure for more boats is seeing the number of moorings increasing. Also yachts are getting larger and take up more space so that this is also leading to the mooring spreading along the river. The yacht moorings on the river are already showing signs of filling the whole river, following the pattern set on the South Coast.

High powered craft travelling at speed has been an issue for several decades. This is extremely dangerous for other boat users and seriously disturbs the wild life. The wash is probably contributing to the loss of salt marsh along the river. High-speed craft are totally inappropriate for the future tranquilly to the River Deben. A compromise was agreed in the 1980s where water skiing just took place on the Black Stakes Reach above Felixstowe Ferry. The speed limit should again be enforced and this would then control the problem.

The Felixstowe-Bawdsey Ferry is an economic venture and highly popular with the public and all steps should be taken to keep it going. The possibility of reopening Woodbridge-Sutton and Ramsholt-Kirton Ferries for walkers is feasible and could be run by volunteers following the pattern of the Butley Ferry on the Butley River.

Any future reopening of ferries should be done from landing hards. The building of jetties has proved

problematical. They appear to create erosion and silting on either side. The jetty and pontoon at Woodbridge Boatyard and Woodbridge Cruising Club don't seem to have done serious harm, but have possibly encouraged silting along that side of river and may have contributed to the erosion of the salt marsh on the opposite shore. The jetties at Waldringfield, and at the water-skiers jetty in the Black Stakes has led to erosion below, while Bawdsey Ferry jetty has led to erosion above the jetty and the shingle building up as well. At Ramsholt Dock the quay has led to silting up both above and below, and may have deflected the tide to cause erosion on the Kirton shore.

COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES

While the leisure industry is important to the public houses, cafés and house letting along the Deben, agriculture is by far the largest and most important industry in the area. The Suffolk coast has become a leading area in supplying the United Kingdom with fresh vegetables. This depends totally on irrigation, and if the climate does get warmer and population increases, the need for water of irrigation will increase. The Government has allowed irrigation water to be stored on high ground in huge reservoirs. This is an extremely expensive, both in capital cost and energy requirements, the old method of storing water in low lying valleys is much more environmental friendly. The Deben valley has many irrigation ponds protected by the river walls.

Over the past fifty years the number of boats kept on swinging mooring and ashore in dinghy parks has increased

at the rate of about thirty boats a year. The number of boats kept on the Deben has steadily increased and the pressure will be for it to go on increasing.

This means more work for the boat yards in repair work and winter boat storage. Firstly, all existing boatyards should be maintained and planners not be lured into allowing them to be converted into housing estates. In the future boatyards will have to expand to be able to take on the increasing work. Perhaps this expansion should be in land rather than along the shore. There are serious problems with quays silting up and these have to be dredged out.

The inshore fishery in the Deben and the surrounding inshore waters is on a very small scale and in future should be allowed to exist in a sustainable way.

TOURISM AND HERITAGE

The heritage of the River Deben is its peaceful and productive countryside and its tranquil tidal waters with its rich wild life. The Deben's more recent history has been yachting and shooting and even more recently, bird watching. Two major national events took place in the Deben Valley, the Sutton Hoo ship burial in 625 and the development of radar at Bawdsey Manor just before the World War II. The Woodbridge Tide Mill was the last working tide mill in the United Kingdom although it has struggled financially as a tourism attraction. The ship and boat building at Woodbridge is important locally and the development of a maritime museum in part of the former

Whisstock Yard would be important locally. The focus on the Whisstock site would be to keep alive wooden boat building skills, funded by shops and cafes for tourists. It might even lead to the long held desire of many local people to build a replica of the Sutton Hoo Anglo-Saxon longship.

Along the river the most important features are the medieval churches and river walls. Keeping the ferries running would also be a part of keeping the rivers heritage alive. Tourism does bring an economic stream into the area, but it is easy to over estimate its real worth to the community. Other areas have developed tourism projects that have not been financially stable and have negative impacts on the area. Any future planning on tourism should be very carefully considered. Tourism is not the silver bullet to solve all local problems.

PLANNING STRUCTURE

An organization to safeguard the Deben valley and people living there can only be creditable if it is totally independent of all local and national Government bodies. In the past local authorities have showed a desire to take control of all the Deben affairs and place them under a central authority, presumably controlled from an office in Woodbridge or Felixstowe. More recently Government agencies have shown a very strong desire to take over total control of the Deben estuary outside of their statutory flood protection powers.

The present structure of managing the tidal waters has proved successful for

the past fifty years. A mooring committee manages each anchorage and they are run for the benefit of the local community. This structure should be maintained, but it will have to be tactfully developed to cope with the increased pressure from leisure boating. Any future planning will have to tackle the decision whether to fill the river with yacht moorings or build another marina.

Flood protection does need a central policy so that time and resources are not wasted.

Robert Simper



SOME HISTORY OF RAMSHOLT

In seeking information on the History of Ramsholt I have concluded that what you learn depends on who you ask. It seems, there are no hard and fast facts! I have put a lot of faith in two sisters, Margaret King and Pat Bendon (nee King), who were born at Poplar Farm, Ramsholt, where the family had been tenant farmers for generations.

Most readers are aware, I'm sure, of the Church at Ramsholt, overlooking as it has done for centuries, the wonderful river Deben. In the past, invariably being accompanied by muddy dogs that objected to being left outside anywhere when on a country walk, and myself wearing dirty boots, I had never been inside the Church of All Saints. On this day however, before entering, I wanted to look for the grave of Col. Ian Battye, who had been the River Deben Association's first chairman and leading light on the steering committee. I soon came across a neat, unusually small head stone that bore a regimental insignia above his name, in clear relief in the low, sharp sunlight, placed deep in the rough grass under a young tree.

The Church's history seems full of mysteries, not least the story of 'small miracles' of St Thomas, that had occurred 800 years ago and were found among records made soon

after the saint was martyred at Canterbury in 1170. The priest at All Saints, at the time, was Edric, which is a Saxon name.

Due to the external buttresses the tower gives the illusion of being oval but, from inside, I am told – for the door affording access to the inside of the Tower is locked - it is seen to be round. At the time when it was built, plans were rarely drawn for buildings of this kind and so the shape would have simply been marked out on the ground. Many, including Cautly who writes, that “it is one of only two oval towers in Suffolk”, do believe it to be so.

It is thought by some historians that the tower was originally built as a Roman or Viking lookout point or pharos , (there is an example of this near Dover Castle in Kent.) I am, however, assured by a well known local writer of books about the Deben, that the tower is of early Norman construction and therefore erected long after that time. The myth seems to have come from a guess by George Arnott, who put it in a book and people have just believed it.

Setting off down the track from the Church, past where, until the “sixties” the remaining

cottages of a medieval village had stood: beautifully recorded in a painting by John Moore C 1880, showing their charming vernacular proportions so often evident in old Suffolk buildings, one soon enters the grazing marsh – Dock Marsh - characteristic of much of the cattle-grazing land that had bordered the Deben in the past.

A glance to my right revealed the white plasterwork of Gamekeeper’s Cottage, traditional residence of the head keeper on the ‘Ramsholt Beat’, but lived in for many years by the well known Australian water-colourist, Arthur Boyd – a self-effacing man in the extreme, who could be seen walking the fields by moonlight in his paint covered smock. He had painted a portrait in his rather loose style of old George Collins, the present harbour-master’s father, who, on seeing it, said “It dooant look a bit like me” and promptly handed it back to him. His work, which was, even then, selling for thousands of pounds in a London



gallery, was clearly not to everyman's taste !

The present Gamekeeper, Richard Ling, retires at the end of the 2012 'season,' (January 31st) after about thirty years on this Estate. The old school and schoolhouse had at one time been used as the Gamekeeper's residence and store. In the '90s the artist Hugh Webster moved in to make his home and studio there. (Hugh can be found these days at his studio-hut, in the Ferry Boatyard at Felixstowe). Now a weekend cottage, the old school room is the main living room and has been retained open to the rafters.

Leaving Dock Marsh the path passes below the Ramsholt Arms, the narrow end of which, was originally the Ferryman's Cottage – the Pub at that time being up the hill from the dock, later to become a private house.

Wandering down towards the Hard one finds the present Harbourmaster, George Collins "junior" – tucked up in what was described by Practical Boat Owner, as "the smallest Harbourmaster's Office in Britain" (see previous issue of The Deben) – a hut on the deck of an old red-painted hull named "Red Cap", parked there above the quay. George took over from his Father in 1984 and reckons if he "dooant goo dowan each day, the tide woant com in."

George was born in Church Cottages, spending his childhood there in the 1930s - one of six children. The village

school which had been built in 1879 at a cost of £750 and opened with 120 children present, closed in 1927 in spite of there being 58 pupils still attending: so George, along with his brothers and sisters, "had to walk the two and a half mile to Awl'erton each day, to goo to school theya . . . 'til '38 or '39, when there were buses". The building as it is today can be seen by going up the hill and into School Lane, which is a very pleasant route back to the Church.

Dropping down, along the Hard to the water's edge, I began to imagine the hustle and bustle that must have gone on there in the past and wondered just how many boats and people had come and gone from that spot. The original



Ramsholt School

'Ramsholte Ferrye' began in 1502 (see 1946 edition of 'The Place Names of the Deben Valley', W.G. Arnott) and went from the Rocks, where the field on the top of the cliff is called 'Ferry Hempland', to Guston in Kirton Creek, but it soon moved down to operate from where I was standing, that sunny morning, to the hard on the other side which, at that time, belonged to Walton Manor who, in 1504, leased it to

'William Waller of Ramsholte, (believed to be of the same family as the present Rev. John Waller of Waldringfield - owner of the boat 'Jesus'). It is not known when the Quay on the Ramsholt side was originally constructed but it could have been soon after 1504 and may have been the one that was there when Sir Cuthbert Quilter bought the land from the Wallers in about 1880. Although used by barges until 1926 and for taking workers and produce for delivery to Woodbidge across the river,(until the roads improved and the crossing at Wilford Bridge was completed,) it had been deteriorating since the 1870s and was eventually washed away in the floods of 1953 after which the owners took advantage of the State scheme to finance any damage caused and had the Dock rebuilt.

Since then, in the early 2000s, the Fairway Committee, supported by the River Deben Association; local people and yachtsmen from all over the East Coast, fought a legal battle to secure a public right of way down the Hard to access the waterside and river for perpetuity.

The now visible remains of the Hard on the other side of the river were for many years buried under silt, but this washed away in 1982.

During the second World War there were evacuees from the cities in the village, who,"- 'cause they were children, didn't seem to mind the wildness of the place at all . . ."

George's father was the first Chairman

of the Fairway Committee, it having been formed by Norman Simper in 1959 who soon became Chairman right up until 2007. There were then, as now, 200 moorings but today's boats are longer.

Like so many of us, George reckons if you go to somewhere like Wales or Scotland, you wonder why you had gone there, away from the Deben. Likewise, Robert Simper, when asked on a visit to Australia, "don't you think it wild?" had thought, "well no, not really, not as wild as Ramsholt" and I must say, that when in Australia myself, I had thought it rather threadbare . . . is there a cautionary tale in these stories for those of us involved in Deben Valley management campaigning . . . ?

In 1940, during World War II, a B17G Flying Fortress bomber plane, having had an engine fire and mistaken the Deben for a runway, landed and sank in 19ft of water. Yacht skipper Arthur Hunt saved the only two survivors in his fishing boat. More can be seen about this on the walls inside the Ramsholt Arms.

There are no recorded public footpaths down to Peyton Hall, where a moated Tudor Hall had once stood. There must have been a missed opportunity at some time in history to record a route surely well trodden by servants from the medieval village around the Church - most likely along the 5 metre contour line which meanders its way right up to the footprint of the old Hall – the origin of so many of our wonderful public footpaths of today. This observation links well with what Peter

Wain has referred to in his piece on "Kingsfleet - The history of Gosford and Kingsfleet", in Issue 44 of The Deben.

Built by the land-owning Peytons who, when they moved to Ufford, became the de Uffords, the original Tudor building is believed to have been burnt down. Peyton Hall today, stands as a plain Victorian-fronted house with a "sixties" extension at the back. When the remaining back part was pulled down, at that time the timbers were dated as being of 1430 to 1470. The Victorian front half was built in about 1830.

Further down is Poplar Farm, worked from 1830 by the Frenches, until 1873, when the Willis family took the tenancy, followed in 1937 by the King family. Herbert Frank King, known as Frank, eventually took charge from his father, Herbert. On a tape of the BBC Radio Suffolk, "Down Suffolk Way" programme, recorded in 1993, he tells of collecting milk from 13 farms and taking it for distribution each day to Stowmarket, which he did for 9 years: "being moost tricky at Christmas, when they all waanted to give yeo a drink!" On one memorable occasion they came home at 10.30 at night, went straight out fishing and cooked the freshly caught sole for breakfast, before starting all over again – what it was to be young!

Frank's father, Herbert, was the first Parish-Meeting Chairman of Ramsholt and Frank, for many years, was a loyal Church Warden. Inside the Church, a framed tribute to him can be seen in the style of an illuminated text, up on the wall.

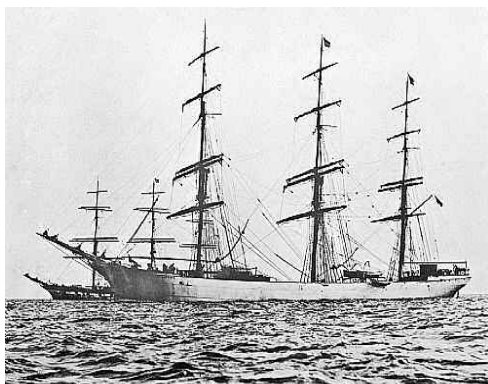
I remember his youngest daughter Pat, telling me of how she used to cross on the ferry from Bawdsey, to go to school in Felixstowe, to which I said, "how lovely". Her reply, predictably, was, "all right in the summer!". When she first left school, Pat cycled to Shottisham to catch the bus to Ipswich each day for work.

Anne Moore

FRANK COWDRY

"Somebody come quick, Shaw is being drowned, . . . some fellows went and pulled him out from under chests, drawers, doors and woodwork of all descriptions. Shaw was unconscious for 17 hours and then he died It was two tremendous seas that came aboard, higher than the main yard, that was the cause of it."

Published in the Brightlingsea Parish Magazine in July 1910, this extract

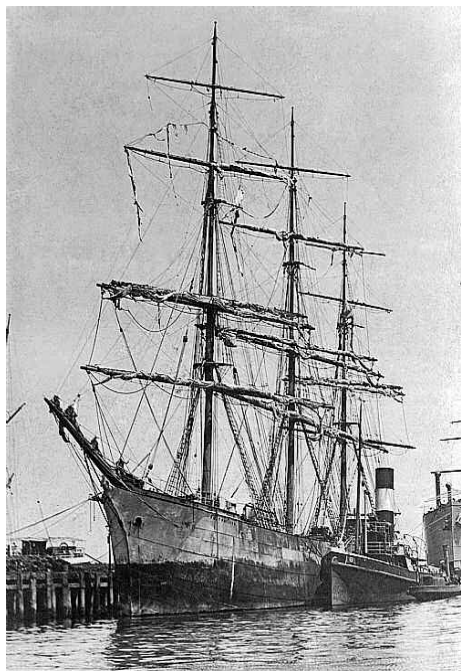


from a letter from 16-year old Frank Cowdry was written during his first taste of the sea, as an apprentice aboard the three-masted square-rigged sailing ship, the 'Port Elgin'. In

May 1911, when she hit rocks off the coast of Peru and sank within ten minutes, Frank writes, "I was pulling stroke oar in our lifeboat. We then pulled off about 100 yards, and watched her sink."

Frank was Denzil Cowdry's father. Denzil, for many years a leading light in the RDA, visited Brightlingsea Museum in 2000, and was able to obtain copies of letters Frank had written to the Vicar during his voyages. "I knew the rough details of the wrecking in Peru," said Denzil. "However, the graphic details of the seven months at sea came as a complete surprise to me 90 years after the event."

Events leading up to the sinking off Peru were graphically described. "It



was my watch below in the early morning from 4 to 8, and when the other watch came and called me, they told me that the island we were bound for, Santa, was about 5 miles ahead on the port bow. I turned out of my bunk, and had a look at it, and then I had my breakfast (a fine breakfast too, for one of the sailors had harpooned a porpoise the night before, and we had his liver for breakfast. He was about 9 feet long, and it took all hands to haul him aboard).

"I had just finished when a boat came alongside with a note to the skipper saying, 'Please anchor your ship where you see a red flag.' The skipper had hardly read it when a thick fog suddenly enveloped us. He sang out immediately to clew up the mainsail, foretopgan's'l, and mizzen to'gan's'l, so as to take some of the way off her. We also hove the deep sea lead, and there was 16 fathoms of water. That was at 8 o'clock, when my watch started. At a quarter to nine, there was a shout from the forecandle head of 'Land ahead!' I looked over the rail, and straight ahead, about the length of the garden of our house, was land.

"Of course the skipper sang out, 'Rack your mainyards and let go the anchor!' and she brought up, with her jibboom end grazing the side of the cliffs, which just here are 2,000 feet high. Well, she seemed to back off a bit, about 20 yards, so he slipped his anchor and 90 fathoms of cable which we had out, but the yards filled again and she went ahead, and ran right slap bang up on the rocks, smashing a hole in her immediately, of course."

After everyone had been ordered to abandon ship, Frank, having quickly packed a bag and thrown it overboard, followed it into the sea and was soon pulled aboard one of the lifeboats. The surf was too strong for them to make shore safely, but “we saw some natives coming out in a surf-boat, and they took us ashore.” Then followed an 8-mile trek to the nearest port, with one of the “natives” acting as a guide. “My word, that was a tramp! Up to your ankles in dust, over high mountains and down valleys, and I with my heavy bag.”

The port was called Chimbote. From here they were taken by a visiting steamer down to Callao, where they were appreciative guests of the Seamen’s Mission. A comment in the Brightlingsea Parish Magazine suggests that young Frank regarded his adventures as a bit of a holiday, and was “quite ready for work again”, and adds that a subsequent enquiry entirely exonerated the Captain of the ‘Port Elgin’ and all his officers from any blame for the disaster.

In January the following year, we find Frank aboard another square-rigger, the Port Patrick, leaving New York for Adelaide. He later describes this as “a very unlucky passage”, having “dropped anchor in the Bay, 135 days out from New York, a record passage for slowness This has been the worst passage I ever made for quarrels, rows, etc with the men forrard only the day before yesterday, it nearly came to murder between a German and the steward, who is a Scotchman. The steward would have been killed had it not been

for the mate and myself, who pulled the German off, for he had got the steward down on deck, and was going to bash him with an iron belaying pin.”

The passage began when “we left New York, January 11th, in tow, making a passage through ice till we got off Sandy Hook; there we dropped both tow boat and pilot, and made for the open sea, as best as our frozen sails and gear would allow us. Thurs Jan13th – Had a terrible accident yesterday morning. We of the starboard watch were just going below, having been on deck from midnight to 4am, when we heard the mate shouting, ‘Call all hands. The wheel has gone!’ she had shipped a heavy sea over the stern, and washed away the two men from the wheel, the wheel too, and the wheel-box, and compasses – smashed in the cabin skylight, and after-end of the chart-house, and carried away half the taffrail round the poop Of course, when the wheel went, she immediately broached to.”

Frank continues, “We all thought we should be lost; even the Old Man said it was all up with us. The ship was simply on her beam-ends, and absolutely full up with water at the time. She couldn’t shake herself clear, but just lay in the trough of the sea, every wave breaking clean over her. We stood up on the poop, waiting for the masts and yards to come down, and to see the hatches, bridge and house swept off the deck. But she behaved splendidly, and after a time, we managed to put a piece of canvas up in the mizzen rigging, which pushed her stern off, and her head up into the

wind, and the tiller being lashed hard over, the ship lay like that for two days.”

On January 18th and 19th, after dumping considerable quantities of cargo “so as to lighten the ship up aft, and also to enable us to get up an old spare wheel which we had down there”, they were able to lash together the spare wheel and fasten hoop-iron around it to make it serviceable. After bending on new sails to replace those blown away, they were at last under way again.

“Mon Jan 22 – When one of the apprentices went to call the mate at a quarter to 12, he found him lying under his bunk, fully dressed, dead. . . . we buried him at 9 today, the ship being hove-to, and the ensign hoisted half-mast Eleven days out, and three of us gone; lost half our canvas, and the ship smashed up!”

Wed Jan 31 – We have been hove-to since Sunday night. Blowing very hard; the Captain thinks it is a hurricane: very heavy sea. Bad luck is following us this passage, all through.”

If that were not enough, when the Port Patrick crossed the Equator, some unfortunate apprentices were sentenced to have their faces painted with tar before the barber “shaved him with a big wooden razor. Neptune then gives him a dose of medicine, to make him strong enough to cross the line (the medicine is made up of soapy water), and then a good drenching in the tub finishes it”

With another 17 days to go, on May

5th we read that “From Sunday up to last night we were head reaching, under 3 lower topsails, going about 2 knots ahead and 3 broadside on. On Monday we were put on a short allowance of water – the Captain is afraid it won’t last – and also on three-quarter whack of food.”

On May 9th, while hove-to during the night, “a big sea broke aboard, smashing up the starboard lifeboat and bridge. We shall look a pretty battered old wreck, when we reach port.” Ten days later he writes, “. . . On Saturday a sea broke over the foc’sle head, and carried away the port lighthouse side-light and bucket rack, washing half-a-dozen buckets overside. Stick it, ‘Port Patrick’! 645 more miles to do; 129 days out.”

Then, on Tuesday 21st May, “At last we have sighted the flash of Adelaide light, away on the starboard bow. 131 days out.” On the 135th day the ship dropped anchor, safe in port.

The Editor of the Brightlingsea Parish Magazine concludes with the following: “We should think that few lads have had such an adventurous experience during their first two years at sea, as our young friend has had. We heartily wish him better luck in the future, in that line of life for which he has proved himself eminently suited.

Pictures of ‘Port Patrick’ supplied by W-M from the State of Victoria Library

[http://www.clydesite.co.uk/clydebuilt/vi
ewship.asp?id=16658](http://www.clydesite.co.uk/clydebuilt/vi
ewship.asp?id=16658)

Leigh Belcham

‘ARTISTS AND WRITERS’

MARGARET WYLLIE



Martello at Bawdsey

I met Margaret Wyllie, known as Miggie, in her studio and workshop. Although Miggie has painted throughout her life she took a degree in her late fifties and has only exhibited since then. One of the first things that impressed me is the prodigious output and range of projects Miggie has been involved with. Her work includes her paintings and drawings and a series of conceptual art installations. She has undertaken a number of commissions for murals and illustrates the Cedric series of children's books.

Her training as a teacher is obvious in the way she

articulates the ideas behind her work and the fluency with which she speaks. Her energy and passion for her work as an artist is ingrained in every word and idea.

Miggie has had a long association with the Deben. She first came here as a child and sailed Kingfishers and the Cherub produced by Everson's. She lived beside the Deben for over a year at Bawdsey. Currently, she sails 'Piper' a Fisher 25 with her husband and 'technician' Jim. She says that although she sketches on board she paints less of the Deben than she used to as she is exploring new areas and themes.

Miggie has a passion for the coastline, the landscape and the sea and many of her pictures reflect this. She is currently involved in the Tidal Margins project and I regretted not going to the preview where I could have bought her



'Fragile Coast'

latest painting of East Lane which evokes the power and darkness of the area with its history and current erosion.

Miggie's conceptual art and installations fascinate me. Although you would not describe Miggie as a political activist her conceptual art is often inspired by a controversial theme or idea which strikes her and this forms the basis for the conceptual piece. While the theme is evoked in the piece it is the nature of the 'communication and interaction' between the piece and the observer and the artist which intrigues Miggie.

Miggie who at one time ran a farm with Jim has painted several pictures about farming. 'The work commented on the state of farming today , particularly the outbreaks of disease amongst humans and stock as a result of our factory farming methods..'

Miggie has taken a number of controversial 'headlines', and these repeated over and over again form the waves of the grass and the crops.

Miggie was Artist in Residence at Otley College and during this time she completed 'Roofing' and 'Coffee Break' which was about the stressed lecturers and their coffee breaks.

Talking about the piece, a table cloth entitled 'Tesco' , Miggie says - 'Tesco used to have a monthly recipe book, 'but it is all about double standards and self deception.. making young women think they are cooking like their Victorian aunts when it is just a construction.'. 'I was into crochet and PVA glue at the time.. and I crocheted

the whole thing from the beginning out ..and I gave it a frill at the bottom..it is supposed to represent the family meal which people don't have any more. But again it made people react. One women said ' Well I sit down with my children.' But I got a reaction! I offered an image of it to Tesco but they said it wasn't relevant.

At Christ Church Mansion Miggie completed a series of 'balls' made out of flowers, leaves and twigs representing the seasons. In Ipswich she made a series of pieces to convey the history and changing ownership of the Ancient House.

Miggie's love of the coastal landscape and the dynamics of erosion, change and intervention is encapsured in several local installations. In 'Stone Circle' she constructed a circle of stones on the Knolls at Bawdsey and photographed them over several tides as the sea gradually washed them away.

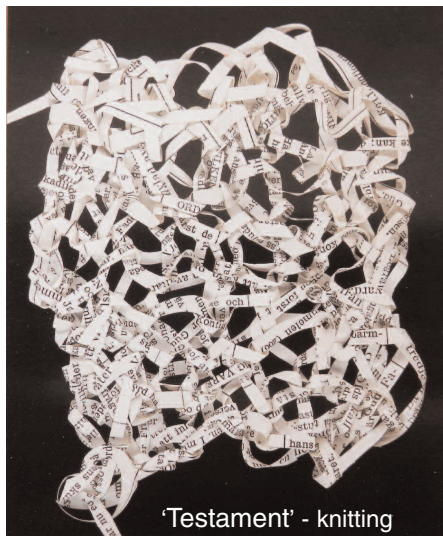
In 'Fragile Coast' Miggie drew attention to the hard and brutal qualities of the rock armour at Felixstowe Ferry contrasted with the soft, and gentle qualities of the texture of the sand of the beach and the flowing lines of the shore at Felixstowe by placing a bright pink soft 'furfabric' covered rock in the midst of the rock armour. 'Again I wanted to make people think. 'It took a thousand balloons to make up the 'rock' 'We spent a day blowing up the balloons with a kite surfing pump and it was so big that it had to be made in the boat yard shed at the Ferry and transported on John Whites boat.'

In 'Endangered Species' Miggie re-used the pink furfabric from the 'rock' to bandage the groynes on the Bawdsey shore in front of the sign which read 'Danger Decaying Groynes'. 'It just seemed terrible that they weren't restoring and repairing them - because they work!'

Miggie's re-use of the 'furfabric' reflected another theme of Miggie's which is re using materials and as she says 'I frequently reconstruct familiar objects, giving them an arresting new image, and hopefully provoking thought.' Her Christmas day installation on the Knolls was made from items washed up on the beach. Ironically, the fish crate which formed the centre piece of the installation was taken from the piece after a short time. Maybe as Miggie says this was in the spirit of the theme.

Another memorable installation was detritus used to spell out a huge slogan on the beach at Bawdsey 'Please take your rubbish home' This involved Jim and Miggie collecting the rubbish from the beach in black plastic bags over several weeks. Each item took on a significance in the context of the other items and as part of the large letters of the slogan itself. It made me think of all the 'stories' behind the items and the journey they had made by land and water to end up on the beach, in addition to the theme itself. I wondered why there are so many single shoes washed up on the beach. What happens to the other ones? As Miggie says one of the problems of making installations from rubbish is that you have to take responsibility for the rubbish at the end.

Possibly Miggie's most dramatic piece of conceptual art is 'Testament'. In this piece Miggie cut up ('deconstructed') a bible and then knitted it to make the piece which hung in Ramsholt Church and in Ely Cathedral.



'I laminated it with cellotape on one side...then I didn't cut it into strips, I cut it round - so it ended up as a long spiral - so from beginning to end it was one piece and it made a rather wiggly and difficult to handle knitting wool.'

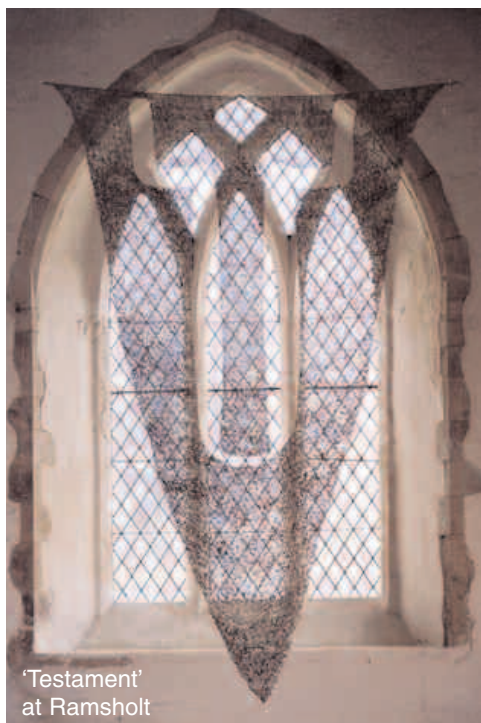
'I started knitting it on Ipswich Station - as you do. Most people avoided me because obviously they knew I was mad. But this women came up and said

'What are you doing? I love knitting!'

'I am knitting the Bible'

'Oh' she said 'I don't go to Church. I don't believe in God'

'And then she started telling me how we are as human beings and how we should behave towards each other. Well if that is not spirituality I don't know what is!'



with family life. However, one of the most impressive aspects of the work is the realisation of the painstaking nature of the constructions and the many hours that goes into the craft of making a piece aside from the original inspiration.

David Bucknell

(A recording of this interview together with the associated images will be on the RDA website in the future.)

MEMORIES OF BAWDSEY QUAY

My grandfather, Harry Edmonds, was born in Orford in the 1880's, son of the school master he worked as a gardener at Sudbourne Hall. It was there that he met my grandmother, Lillian McLean, who worked as a nursery maid. They married in Sudbourne church and moved into to a small cottage nestling beneath the castle in Orford where they brought up three children. My grandfather was a life-long friend of the Brinkley family who farmed Havergate Island - my 95 year old mother well remembers spending her summer holidays there as well as Christmases. The Brinkley family had two boys Charlie and Bill – who was always Uncle Bill to me.

Grandfather turned his hand to many things other than gardening and eventually decided to up sticks and move to Kent where he hoped to make a living building properties in developing villages. As my mother tells the story, Bill had recently been 'crossed in love' which caused his hair

'All of this is about communication and interpretation. A lot of people thought it was a religious statement which it isn't. What annoys me about the whole business is that the bible is in every hotel room drawer and you don't have to read it, you don't have to bother with it, but to cut it up is to consider to defile it. If you are going to really question it and pull it into bits, which is what I am doing, and to try and understand it and think about it fully, that is much more valuable than to have it there, saying well there it is, I have got to respect it, but I don't have to read it.'

Miggie is currently working on the next phase of paintings for Tidal Margins 2' Talking to Miggie you become aware of the challenge of creative work; some of the stresses when the work is not going well and the task of combining it



‘to turn white overnight.’ (I must say that I only remember Uncle Bill as having white hair but then everyone over 30 seems ancient when you are a small child). When the Edmonds family moved Bill Brinkley moved with them, remaining with them for decades.

Bill Brinkley was a loner and a man of few words, a shepherd on the Kent marshes, which suited him well. Sadly, my grandfather died of thrombosis in 1953, still a relatively young man, which left Gran and Bill in the house together. Gran worried; what would people say about them living under the same roof, it wasn’t seemly, so Bill had to leave. He returned to Suffolk to live with his elder brother Charlie – Hooky to most people (apparently, his hand was blown off in a shooting accident on Havergate Island one Christmas) – who for years had run the ferry between Bawdsey Quay and Felixstowe Ferry. But Gran pined and about three years later agreed to move to Bawdsey Quay to act as housekeeper to the two old men. The move was long and traumatic. A train from Kent to London followed by more trains to Ipswich and Felixstowe then a

taxi to Felixstowe Ferry. But the worst part was the ferry ride across the Deben to Bawdsey Quay. Gran hated water and it took a very long time to persuade her to get aboard the boat. Once across she never, ever went on the ferry again!

I remember my first visit as a child to 2, Quay Cottages. It felt as though Bawdsey Quay was at the end of the world - especially as it was blowing a gale and lashing with rain at the time. But Gran was happy there. She planted roses in her garden, though I have no idea how they survived in such sandy soil. However, I am assured by Lillian Lloyd (a previous owner) that they still survive and flourish. I remember a huge solid fuel range (which gran regularly blacked) that turned out the best Yorkshire puddings ever as well as roast pheasants that met their end by unusual accidents. Gran was friendly with the Escotts who lived next door - I think Reg Escott had something to do with the accidents! That range was a source of great interest to me as I could never understand how you judged just how much fuel to add to the roaring fire in order to keep the oven at the correct temperature. Anyway, Gran, Charlie and Bill seemed to have the system cracked.

Gran and I would go beachcombing for pieces of amber and sea coal that had washed up on sparkling, sunny days

when the river looked gorgeous – far less crowded with yachts than it is today. Playing cricket on the stretch of sand close to the jetty – few people visited The Quay in those days. Gran and I would walk to the NAFFI where she was allowed to shop, there being no shop in Bawdsey village.



Charlie 'the hook' Brinkley helming the ferry

Once a week she caught the bus into Woodbridge, leaving early in the morning and not returning until well into the afternoon. It was the only time she left Bawdsey Quay. Charlie and Bill eagerly awaited her return with the table set for tea – no doubt she brought something good to eat. A young man called Peter Shelcott, who lived in Bawdsey village, ran a mobile shop. He delivered the newspapers every day as well as visiting with his shop a couple of times a week. Despite being such a small and remote community it was a friendly place with much activity from the RAF chaps and, of course, there was always something happening on the river.

Both Bill and Charlie were quiet, kind men. Charlie had relinquished the ferry to his son 'young Charlie' who deeply resembled Uncle Bill. In those days there was a flag pole on Bawdsey Quay and the flag was ceremonially raised and lowered morning and evening by RAF personnel. Twice a

day Bill and Charlie would walk to the flag pole to survey the sky, pronouncing in their broad Suffolk accents their weather prediction for the day. I don't remember whether they were right or wrong.

Charlie eventually died, leaving Bill and Gran together for a time (clearly, gran must have thought them too old for people to gossip) before Bill too became ill and died in Eye hospital. Gran continued living at 2, Quay Cottages for a couple of years but was struggling to look after herself. She ended her days living with her daughter in Ipswich, by then an old lady of 87.

In my mind little changed over the years at Bawdsey Quay until the refurbishment of the quay a couple of years ago. Even so the changes are few – no flagpole, more signs, more people and a smarter car park and jetty, but that's not bad in today's world. Long may it continue to be the unspoiled place that it still is.

Out of interest did you know that there is such a thing as a Brinkley Stick – a portable safety device used for discharging high voltage capacitors (two and a quarter million volts) and ensuring HT electrical circuits are

discharged - which resembles a hook. It was so named by RAF staff at Bawdsey after Charlie Brinkley, the amputee with a hook, who ferried them across the Deben.

Judy Clements

LETTERS

(In 2012 Clare Barfield 'googled' Eversons and found the story of the two sisters. I put her in touch with Ron Everson)

Dear David

Oh yes Ron Everson did contact me, much surprised to hear about a side of the family and a cousin quite unknown to him. He was of the impression that my grandmother died very young and so never married to say nothing of children. He was delighted to hear from me, and we have written quite a number of times already.

He has been a great help to me, but it has also been marvellous to get to know him.

I cannot thank you enough, and if I have failed to do this properly already then I am very sorry. Your help really turned my research around and it has been great fun "talking" to Ron.

One thing I would like to ask: would it be ok to quote from your article in my family story? It is only for the eyes of the family, I have no intention of putting it on the internet etc...

Once again, thank you so much for taking the trouble to put me in touch with Ron when I am sure you have many more pressing things to do.

Best Wishes

Clare

8 June 2012



River Deben Association

AUTUMN MEETING

to be held at

Waldringfield Village Hall

School Lane, Waldringfield. IP12 4QP

On Friday 9th November 2012 at 7.30pm

**TOURISM and the DEBEN:
is it killing the golden egg?**

The speakers:

Nick Collinson, Manager of the Suffolk Coast & Heaths
AONB

and

Alex Paul, a Director of Suffolk Coast Ltd, that markets
this area as a tourist destination

Both speakers will outline the measures taken by their respective organisations to mitigate the effects of tourism on the Deben valley.

Refreshments will be followed by questions