

# The Deben



48 Spring 2014

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**47 Autumn 2013**

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## Editorial

### Spirit of Place

Architects and urban planners recognise that many spaces and places have a unique 'feel', an 'atmosphere' which people recognise and resonate with, but which is hard to encapsulate in any new design or building. They struggle to find ways of incorporating this idea in their plans and their architecture. It is left to the writer, the poet, the artist, the musician to evoke this spirit in a way which engages the listener or the viewer in their own personal feelings and emotions. Listening to Peter Grimes conjures up the essence of Orford, Aldeburgh, the mist of the beach and the sea. What would Benjamin Britain have written if he had stayed by The Deben. Many of you will feel this 'spirit of place' about the Deben but will find it hard to articulate other than saying 'Yes I feel it too'.

Ironically at the time planning regulations are being emaciated most District Councils are going through a huge bureaucratic exercise in the consultation processes for the LDF now confusingly called the Local Plan. Having just presented the case for preserving a 'soft edge' to a village on the edge of an AONB I have first hand experience. Although, I think I won the argument in terms of a vision for the village boundary I am not optimistic I will achieve the change. The planners, although sympathetic, lacked any passion and were bogged down in 'saved policies', national policy guidelines and concerns about people who want to exploit the value of their properties by building in their gardens whatever the impact on the environment. I

doubt, once the further consultation process has been gone through, I will get the boundary changed. This will lead to an endless round of planning applications all of which will be contested resulting in a waste of public money and effort on the part of local people.

Can the Deben be all things to all people? Not without the loss of the 'spirit of place'. One of the dangers of the political process is the need to try and appeal to a wide range of groups and interests. Unsafe issues are put to one side; in order to achieve a consensus the language used is often generalised and vague. Consequently, projects and proposals can all be said to meet the criteria provided they are presented in the right way with the appropriate language. There is also a danger that in making policy statements, that planners and developers can make the case for having met the relevant criteria ,whether it is for conservation or the environment, whatever they propose. The project meets the government energy saving requirements and targets, sympathetic screening will be provided, the cladding will match the existing buildings and so on.

The notion of spirit of place is indefinable, a whole, multi layered, evolution of social history and landscape. But the essence of the notion is the 'spirit', a spiritual connection. There is a danger that in trying to talk about the Deben and the issues involved -to plan for the river, albeit with conservation and protection in mind - that we reduce the 'spirit' to its component parts, landscape, agriculture, heritage, tourism, employment, transport, recreation and so on. Similarly, if we want to protect something, whether it is a bird or a building, or a place, we make a boundary round it, introduce fencing, and draw up guidelines and rules. I have heard of the notion of 'tranquility areas' and wonder

who will be allowed to enter. Not unlike the anomaly the 'quiet coach'.

What can we do to preserve the 'spirit' of the Deben. One suggestion is that we should practice 'minimal intervention' and only intervene when absolutely necessary to conserve and protect what we value. In addition we can, as we try to do in the magazine, celebrate the artists and writers and the history of the Deben in all its aspects. This is one of the underpinning ideas behind the Deben Reflections project. I hope that by writing about your own experiences of the Deben and sharing them with others we will continue to celebrate the 'spirit of place'. But perhaps the most important way we preserve the 'spirit of place' is to enjoy the river and make sure we pause and reflect on our own experience and why the river is so special.

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In this edition we have a timely discussion of the issues concerning levees from Andrew Hawes who is an engineer closely involved with the proposals for future work. I hope that Mick Wright's piece, 'Spring Walk' will be the first of a series of seasonal introductions to the natural environment of the river. Peter Wain continues his research into the history of Goseford and Bawdsey and I conclude my account of Billy and Settler. Following on from the talk at last years AGM Sandra Hayes provides more detail of the proposed drilling under the Deben as part of the East Anglia one Project.

Recently, as part of the in the 'Artists and Writers' series I talked to Robert Simper and I hope my piece provides some background which will be of interest, even though many of you will be familiar with his books. Linda Wilkins has crafted a detailed account of one of my favourite boats of the Deben which you can look out for when 'he' is re-launched in the Spring.

In **Deben Reflections** I have included a contribution from John Waller's sister Kit Clark and I hope the two examples will encourage you to contribute. A big thank you to those who have already contributed,.

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## Reverend John Waller



As you know the John Waller died before Christmas last year. Many of you will have known him and some of you will have been to his 'Yachtsmen's Service' About three years ago I talked to John and made an audio recording.

John suggested we met in The Fox at Newbourne and a stream of people came up and talked to him. As we were leaving in the car park, John said 'Do you know, I have been lucky. I am part of their births, I marry them and I am with them at their deaths. I am privileged to have been part of this community.' John was struggling with cancer at the time but I felt a remarkable sense of his contentment.



River Deben Association

## Chairman's Report

Since the last edition of 'The Deben' we have had some major storms and flooding. The tidal surge that took place in December reached record levels, even surpassing those reached in 1953. Fortunately the river walls held out at the most crucial places. However the breach that occurred just downstream of Kyson's Point and the flooding at Waldringfield and Felixstowe Ferry have caused a lot of damage at great cost to the local land and house owners.

**Deben Estuary Plan:** Much time has been spent by three or four members of our Committee to help bring the Plan to fruition. It is nearing completion and hopefully the Deben Estuary Partnership will publish it before our AGM in April. There will then be a period in which the community will be asked to make comments before it is finalised. The RDA's Review of River Users, which has now reached its eighth revision, will be included as one of the Appendices.

**River Users' Code:** I mentioned this in my last report. It has now been finalised and will be produced within the next month (assuming no hitches). Copies will be available at our AGM.

**Woodbridge Library:** The Manager of Woodbridge Library has kindly allowed us to install a bookshelf dedicated to the RDA. It has a plaque on top of the shelves noting this. Currently it contains a complete set of our magazine, 'The Deben'. In time we will

add to this with copies of the Committee minutes and relevant reports of interest to members.

**Whisstocks Project:** Demolition will start in the early summer and in two years time the development should be completed. The Woodbridge Riverside Trust (WRT) Project team is working very hard to grow from a campaign group to a competent community management organisation. They now have individual committees covering: educational projects, training and development, community projects, the Anglo Saxon ship replica build and research, boat shed design and construction, fund raising, media and PR, business planning and administration. Annie Leech (a member of our Committee) is taking a leading role in this work. The Section 106 planning agreement binds the developer to his public commitments and the WRT has been closely involved in discussions related to this. The WRT has written a set of covenants for the management of the public open space for consideration and adoption by the SCDC planners and the Woodbridge Town Council.

**Saltmarshes:** Simon Read and his team are to be congratulated on his recent work to control and reduce the erosion of the Falkenham Saltmarsh. He has used timber, brushwood, straw bales and coir to complete this work. The RDA Committee is currently setting up a project to monitor the erosion of the saltmarsh on Loder's Cut Island. We have the support of the Kyson Fairway Committee, who lease the land from the Crown Estate, and have received a proposal from Carol Reid for the

specification for the monitoring work and equipment.

Let's hope that the appalling weather that we have had over the last three months gives way to a wonderful warm and sunny summer, ideal for 'messaging about in boats'!

I look forward to seeing you at our AGM when our guest speaker, Mark Mitchels, will be giving a presentation on '*The Upper Reaches of The River Deben*'.

Robin Whittle

## News from the Hards

Anne Moore

### Woodbridge and Melton

At the time of writing there was still much evidence, on the quayside, of the exceptional flood surge experienced this winter - mats of dead vegetation deposited by the tide as it receded; a sick-looking hellebore in a tub, that had clearly not enjoyed the unwelcome dose of salts; an Italian Cyprus, like an abused water colour brush symbolising the Art Club which, in spite of sandbags at the front doing their job well, had been flooded from the rear, over the Harbour wall.

As I stood, this day, enjoying the magnificent light effects on the water from the southerly sky and the lovely old classical shapes of the three Bawleys that are tied up by Whisstock's quay, I thought again of how lucky we are to live here - those of us who do.

Bawleys are broad beamed, shallow draft, gaff cutters with distinctive lanyard footrope rigging by the shrouds, used originally for shrimping around the Thames and Medway estuaries and now, the Mary Amelia built in 1914 and Florrie built in

1904, belong to members of the Simper family from Ramsholt.

Robertsons Yard was full. Mike Illingworth reported a busy winter with a diverse range of wooden boats - a 17ft Salcombe yawl; a 37ft gaff cutter and by where I was standing, was a Finnesse, one of five to have come in this winter, named '*Marrette*', a clinker -built craft that typically, Mike said, had come in for bilge work but then the owner said 'could you just have a look at this and do that for me?' - like we all do when a plumber or a builder comes to the house!

Their floodgate had protected the main workshop and offices, but in the building used by Mike Clarke and Tim Smith, water had reached above bench height bringing all sorts of things floating out from behind stacked materials including an unclaimed, old wooden guitar!

Tim's project - the dinghy for the Sea Scouts (see The Deben 47) is nearing completion. He will, he tells me, name her '*Sylvia Ruth*'. A joy to look at - so smooth and tactile - upturned on her supports she just missed having a premature launch.

The main river water damage at the yard has been to the winching machines and repairs were slow to come due to the high demand, therefore launchings were delayed, leaving a lot of catching up to do: for example, the launch of '*Sun Cloud*' which was delayed from 5th Dec to this day, 28th January. But their defences, had, otherwise, worked well.

Jennifer Skeet, at Melton Boat Yard (formerly Granary Yacht Harbour - and it still bears that name on the Board at the top of Dock Lane!) said they witnessed 'History being made' as the surge, point four of a metre higher than that of 1953, overtopped the river wall, came under the floodgates, to run down past the cottage, where they

have their office, fortunately aloft, and into their workshop where they were already getting things up and out to safety. Plastic sheeting, and anything else they could lay their hands on was being stuffed under the gates, which, nevertheless had kept out, they reckon, 95% of the water. Cups of tea were being brewed until 4.00 a.m., when they were finally able to go home.

Boats on the jetty there, had had their electricity modules ripped out. Business is, nevertheless, busy - with a 'shed' on wheels at the end of the quay now, for enabling grit-blasting to, in future, be done under cover.

After wandering about the yard a bit, I came upon John Krejsa, who emerged from a doorway revealing a workshop, stocked with timber poles from Canadian Sitka Spruce, ready for shaping into mast and spars for his project of restoring the Yawl *'Mist'*, touched on in earlier issues of the Deben. Look for her full story in the Autumn copy.

At Larkman's, their defences had worked well. The yard is packed with yachts that give the impression of being fairly modern, but maybe next time, I'll see if I can root out one or two with interesting stories to tell.

## **The Hamlet of Felixstowe Ferry, after the Flood**

It was remarkable to see how little evidence there is now of the effects of the storm surge of earlier this winter, on this little hamlet.

Higher than the floods of 1953, the water rolled in and over the Ferry foreshore, inundating the low-lying Ferry Café, up to three inches above their floor level which, itself, is about three feet above ground,

but, they 'shook themselves down' and set about clearing up.

The whole place, the Café, has been refitted – everything had to be replaced that was electrical and as yet at the proprietors expense, until the Insurers settle their claim.

I enjoyed a first class plate of fish, chips and salad there to the sounds of Bill Hayley and Shotgun Boogey, feeling my feet twitch, to jump up and have a good jive, on that cold, damp day.

Wandering among the dilapidated old huts where Bannisters had, had a board up, offering the Fisherman's Hut for sale, "in need of refurbishment and repair", at a Guide Price of £30,000, but which, they have informed me, was withdrawn just before contracts were exchanged, I looked again at where the proposed Harbour Master's House might be built. At the time of writing, Feb 7<sup>th</sup>, a revised application is pending approval. This would be for a reduction in overall height by 400mm, ridge to ground and the footprint would be relocated one metre further back from the river frontage, butting up to the extreme rear boundary of the plot.

My personal view is, in looking, even now, at the plans, that this three storey building would not seriously fully function as a Harbour Master's operational base, with 'recovery' and 'first aid' on the top floor and no means of lifting injured people up there, I ask, might this 'become' a residential, three storey house?

Turning now to look at the river as I sauntered down to the water's edge, there was none of the juvenile Herring Gulls that were gathered there on the shore in the Autumn, all wearing the latest fashion for teenage gulls. It seemed, as I watched birds swooping and dipping over the



choppy waters, that they must have grown up to look just like their parents – not something humans any longer do – not since the end of the fifties.

Approaching two massive channel buoys – “Oxley” and “Weir”, who were puzzlingly high and dry, standing shoulder to shoulder overlooking the jetty, I pulled myself up onto the top of the flood wall to set off for a walk which led past an Information Board, prominently erected on the very top of the wall, although it informs one of absolutely nothing about what you see from where you are standing, but about the other parts of the AONB, which could surely have been done less obtrusively, lower down.

Taken over to Bawdsey a week or two earlier by someone who very obligingly ran the Ferry to take me, plus two others, across, when the service was not officially working out of season (although, the Deben Estuary Partnership Access Group have talked of negotiating a possible extension to the service at some time in



the future)

I was struck to see a newly erected Information Board **there**, prominently obtruding between the viewed riverscape and the viewer - yet another object along

the bank - it does inform much about Bawdsey, some that I had not heard of before, such as the remains of WWII defences and a wharf which was difficult to locate among the lumps and bumps on the beach. Rights of Way for walkers are also there, on the Board, but Footpath No7, is currently considered unsafe and was closed nearly a year ago – this is the one that takes you northwards and passes under the Pulhamite Cliffs below Bawdsey Manor, so we must hope to see that re-opened soon.



These boards are mainly paid for by money awarded to the AONB ‘Balance Project’, that has earmarked funding from Europe. There could be additional visible effects, but Heaven forbid that there will be sculptures appearing to denote the AONB –they are for Parklands - we should simply leave it to change organically? Flood defence work excepted.

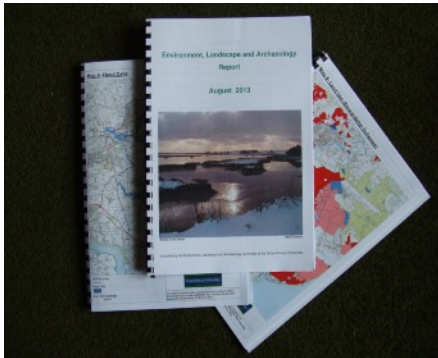
With my bike on board I had not needed to accept the helpful offer of a return ferry and so set off to enjoy, while it is still much as I’d discovered it exploring, this unexpected, unspoilt place we’d come to live in, in the ‘70s; not knowing then, that it had, two years earlier, been designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty . . . . .

## Michael Thomas

### **This is the ELAC Report !**

Since it was set up some 18 months ago, the Environment, Landscape and Archaeology Committee of the Deben Estuary Partnership has been consulting widely on environmental matters within the Deben Estuary.

Over 100 issues have been raised and along with inputs from statutory bodies, interest groups, organisations and individuals, these have formed the basis for this report, which sets out the current situation and recommends options for conserving the qualities which make the Deben so special.



The Committee includes representatives from : The Environment Agency, Natural England, The NFU, The National Trust, The RSPB, The Suffolk Wildlife Trust, The River Deben Association, Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB, Location and Wildlife Interest Groups.

The committee also has direct access to SCC and SCDC officials.

The report is well worth reading. (it is available on line as well as in paper form)

and has recently been sent to all Parish Councils.

It has two main purposes:

1. To form “material evidence” in the formation and adoption of the long term Estuary Plan for the Deben.
2. To allow local groups and individuals who have hopes and concerns to get involved and work towards a sustainable future for the Estuary.

A key element in ELAC’s work is therefore to provide a route for people to air their views and have an influence on how the Estuary is managed.

We always need your thoughts and assistance, so please contact us by telephone or e-mail.

There are already a number of projects underway, but these are only the first steps in a whole range of considerations which must be addressed if the Deben is to remain a unique environmental asset for

The ELAC Report runs in tandem with the recently completed Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan and endeavours to show the way ahead and the priorities for action.

Mick Wright

## Spring Walk

What a difference a year makes! Last winter was bitterly cold with snow and ice and low temperatures into May. Spring was really a non-starter; migrant birds from warmer climates arrived in much lower numbers and some species were late. The weather, yet again, wreaked a heavy toll, in one way or another, on our wildlife. Many species are living on a knife-edge; it is just not weather conditions they have to contend with and survive but all the pressures we exert upon them. During this winter we have seen a contrast in the weather. The relentless gale force winds have caused havoc throughout the countryside. December was the warmest on record and of course, the 'surge tide' will linger long in our memories. Certainly, more birds will have survived this winter.

I was not worried about my fencing panels or my neighbours for that matter but I did wonder whether the Heron nests survived. Their nests become bulky structures as new sticks are added each year before they re-line them with finer roots and grasses. Many of the nests were blown out or wrecked so, the Heron, which is one of the first birds to start breeding will be rebuilding their nests in February. The hinterlands of the Deben supports two colonies but now-a-days there are only 10 – 12 nests whereas in the mid 1980's there were around 30 nests. The drop in numbers, which is happening to most of Suffolk heronries, can be attributed to the loss of mature trees from the colony and an increase in public recreation beneath the nests, which in turn leads to chilled eggs and predation. In Tyburn Wood there

used to be 40 nests but this wood was clear felled in the mid 1950s.

Those of you that braved the winds and walked the footpaths and sea walls must have been impressed by the skeins of Brent Geese flying to and from the estuaries mudflats and saltmarshes. These are of the Dark-bellied variety, which have been breeding on the islands and coast of central and western Siberia. Each winter the juvenile and adult birds are counted to determine how successful the breeding season has been. The juveniles are easy to tell apart from their parents as they lack the white neck collar and their wing coverts are distinctly barred buff. Sometimes there are no juveniles at all. I know that some farmers do not like these birds on hinterland crops and fields and are moved on but the birds do have to go somewhere. DEFRA ought to compensate the farmers for any loss of crops. A few Bewick Swans over-wintered and a few lucky walkers saw Short-eared Owl and Hen Harrier. Once again, several Marsh Harriers also over-wintered and soon the others that moved further south for the winter into Africa will return to join them. The Deben provides a number of excellent habitat areas in which these birds can breed.



Chiffchaff

Soon spring will be upon us and the first Chiffchaffs, after spending the winter

months in Senegal, will be singing once again. These birds begin to arrive in March along with Wheatears and Black Redstarts. The best chance to see these birds is at Bawdsey or in the Felixstowe Ferry area.



Spring for me is when the Hazel catkins have gone over and the buds are beginning to burst into life and the Celandines are in full flower. Mistle Thrushes will be feeding young ones, while Blackbirds and the Chaffinches will be singing for all their worth, spurred on by the longer warmer sunny days.

Lets hope that this spring will be kind to our wildlife.

By the end of April and the beginning of May, providing the weather has been kind, summer migrants will be abundant and birdsong will be at its height. Nightingales will have once more returned from equatorial Africa. I wonder if we will we hear the captivating calls of the Cuckoo or the purring of Turtle Doves this year? Once again, butterflies, dragons and hovers will be on the wing, flowers will be blooming and attracting myriads of insects and so the cycle goes on. Despite areas of farming intensification and the ever-increasing need to develop and devour our

countryside, the Deben is still relatively rich in wildlife.

This is also the time when many people come out of hibernation to enjoy the sunny weather and take pleasure in all that the Deben countryside offers. Its tranquility and wildness is of paramount importance so lets make it stay that way. Once lost it will not be regained.

Enjoy your spring walks.

Mick Wright

## **WHAT DEFENDS US FROM TIDAL SURGES, A LEVEE, A DYKE OR A RIVER WALL?**



*1962 temporary repairs to the Deben levees at Woodbridge.*

The flood defences we rely on have a number of names depending on where you are in the world. A dyke in Holland is no different from a river wall in Suffolk or a levee in Louisiana. The term levee seems to be understood Worldwide.

### **What do we ask of our defence?**

Whilst for most of its life a levee will keep the sea out there will be tidal surges which will overtop the defence. A properly designed and maintained levee will survive overtopping for several hours. The role for the river walls on the Deben is therefore to prevent flooding most of the time and to survive overtopping, intact, when overwhelmed. The resultant flooding will then drain away through the tidal sluices when the surge has passed.

### **What is a flood cell?**

This is the area of land afforded protection by a levee. You will note I have not said protected from flooding, a levee will protect from flooding most of the time but will also overtop in extreme events.

### **The height of a levee.**

Most levees have been constructed several hundred years ago to a height gauged from spring high tides. Over time the sea level has risen and the banks have settled, successive surge events may have prompted a “topping up” of the levees but



*A breach in a levee close to Martlesham Creek, initiated by a very steep back slope and severe cracking, an early slip, overtopping and breach prior to the peak of the surge resulted in a deep scour to the bed level of the Deben. Lumps of clay weighing four tons being washed 200m from the breach location.*

### **Sea level rise.**

Throughout geological time the sea level has never been static, it tends to fall as the planet gets cold and rise as the planet gets warm. This is accentuated in the south of England as the land is sinking due to the north of the UK rising following the retreat of a two mile thick ice sheet at the end of the last ice age. Currently the evidence supports a potential rise of more than 250mm over the next thirty five years

### **Settlement.**

Most levees tend to be built on large thickness of soft alluvial sediments. The weight of these structures slowly squeezes the water out of the underlying alluvium resulting in consolidation settlement. Soil testing can quantify both the amount of settlement expected and the time period over which it will take place, this can take many years. The option to increase the height of levees to increase the flood resistance and prevent overtopping does not exist. Increased weight accelerates settlement until a situation is reached where adding any further weight causes immediate settlement, this is called bearing capacity failure.

### **Desiccation cracking.**

All clay levees will crack over time, seasonal cracking becomes very evident along footpaths when warm dry weather arrives in the summer. This cracking can propagate throughout the thickness of the wall over time. All measures to reduce cracking should be adopted when possible.



*Harmless overtopping during a surge in 2007 on the Alde.*

### **Vegetation cover.**

Any trees, reeds or brambles are to be avoided on any levee, the very high evapo transpiration potential lends itself to severe seasonal and long term permanent cracking. All efforts must be made to encourage a healthy grass cover, which has the primary effect of substantially contributing to the overtopping resistance of the defence. Additionally grass maximises the dew fall which helps to maintain moisture content, thus reducing cracking,

### **Overtopping resistance.**

As flood levels rise up the front face of a levee water permeates the cracks within the bank. If these cracks have reached the landward side of the defence water pressure and lubrication can result in the slipping of the landward side of the levee, such slipping will remove any overtopping resistance, a total breach of the defence could be expected within one hour of overtopping.

When the water overtops a levee the velocity of flow down the landward side is dependent on both the depth of the overtop and the angle of the landward slope. The deeper the overtop and steeper the bank the faster the water flows. A good grass cover can only withstand a velocity of approximately 3.5 m/s for two hours; after this the turf

will start to be washed away exposing the desiccated clay which will soon slip and then breach as the water cascades down the unprotected back face.

Many of the Deben river walls are too steep on the landward side, when water enters the cracked clay the bank quickly slips leading to total breach within an hour if overtopping continues. Angles steeper than 20 degrees tend to give a much higher risk of slipping when lubricated.



A new footpath surface north of Martlesham Creek, washed off during the December surge, this lowered the defence and increased the overtopping time, increasing the damage.

### **Footpaths along the top of levees.**

In recent years with greater and greater footfall along river walls footpath improvements have been adopted which severely reduce the ability of the levee to withstand overtopping. There has been no consideration as to how a levee performs and why it is there in the first place. A simple choice exists, maintain the river walls correctly such that all elements, including the footpath surface; prioritise overtopping resistance or there will be no footpath and no defence.

Both the Deben Estuary Partnership and the Alde and Ore Partnership have voiced their concern for a number of years as to the unsuitability of the compacted sand and gravel footpath surfacing. During the December surge event none of the newly applied footpath surfaces of sand and gravel were able to withstand overtopping, quickly washing away thereby lowering the defence and increasing the overtopping time. Suffolk County Council Rights of Way will be trialling new techniques which benefit the performance of the levees while providing improved access.



Peter Wain

## Beer from Bawdsey

In July 1346 Edward III sailed for France with an army of invasion. The result of this invasion culminated in the great battle of Crecy (August 26<sup>th</sup> 1346) and soon after the commencement of the siege of Calais (September 1346). Calais was besieged until September 1347 and, having fallen, remained in English control until January 1558.

Edward's armada of invasion was the largest raised in medieval England comprising over 400 ships. Included were thirteen ships and three hundred and three mariners from the Deben, the old port of Goseford.

What is interesting about these figures is that of the thirty three ports on the east coast north from the Thames only six sent more than thirteen ships and only four provided more than three hundred and three mariners. Of the local ports Dunwich sent six ships and twenty seven mariners, Orford three ships and twenty two mariners.

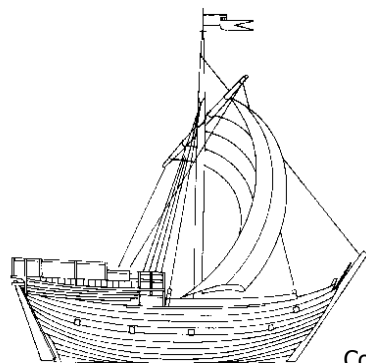
The siege and fall of Calais to the English army was to have consequences for the people of Goseford. Fortresses and armies in foreign countries needed supplies. The English army that marched on Calais had been constantly on the move and therefore largely able to live off the French countryside. An army in a static position could not do this and had to be supplied from much further away.

The Parliament Rolls for 1401 records that *"the people of the towns of Bawdsey and Alderton upon Goseford"* had been given a right to send ale to Calais since the siege ended in 1347. In 1402 it is recorded that additionally the 'town' of

Falkenham had been involved in this supply.

The right may not just have been for the supply of ale. At some time during the reign of Richard II (1377-1399) the people of Bawdsey petitioned the King because the soldiers of Calais were not paying for the goods they supplied and owed 300 marks. (about £100,000 in modern terms). They requested that the Governor of Calais keep a record of goods supplied and that the money owed be taken from the soldier's wages.

What is interesting to note from this petition is not only that the people of Bawdsey were supplying ale at this time but also flour, cheese and other foods. These goods were taken by the merchants of Bawdsey to Calais themselves but the method of sale and distribution appears to have been somewhat chaotic and haphazard. The demand is not just that debts be satisfied but that, in effect, the Governor and Treasurer of Calais should set up what amounted to an early form of an attachment of earnings order on soldier's wages.



Cog

*We know something about the men and the ships of Goseford that were engaged in this trade. There were two ships called la Trinite, one whose mas-*

ter was John Staverley and the other John Hodelande. There was also the



*Godefrende and le cogge Johan. Each of these four ships was of twenty eight tuns. (A tun was a barrel that contained about 250 gallons of wine). The le Martyn was twenty four tuns and its master was William Smyth. There were also smaller Goseford ships. The le Bathelmewe, la Katerine and the la Margarete were each of fifteen tuns and their masters were Thomas Bette, Robert Coke and John Stubbe respectively. They were laden with "ale and other victuals to be taken to Calais".*

It seems that John Staverley, was a regular in the trade. There is a reference to him, again as master of " la Trinite of Baldeseye (Bawdsey), when in 1401 his ship had been laden with "wool hides and woolfells" for Calais.

*The provision of Calais by the people of Bawdsey was a dangerous business. In October 1405 Henry IV had to make a grant that any person who wanted to could take any sort of supplies to Calais because "the people of Goseford and Bawdeseye who have before victualled it with ale and other victuals have been captured by the king's enemies of France and Flanders and their shipping destroyed so that they can no more go to the town with victuals".*

It may be that the people of Goseford never really recovered from these and subsequent similar events or it may have been the enduring effects of the Black Death which halved the population of late fourteenth century England, because Goseford's right to supply Calais came to an end in April 1415, six months before Henry V's invasion of France that resulted in the battle of Agincourt. The towns of Faversham, Sandwich, Dover, Deal and Mungeham in Kent were granted the right that Goseford lost.

The fascinating questions that arise from this trade are firstly, why was it granted in the first place when, as was shown in 1415, there were ports much closer to Calais that were able to supply the necessary commodities? Secondly, where were the quays, jetties, staithes and slipways in Bawdsey, Alderton and Falkenham?

Peter Wain

## New Dragonfly!



James Palmer is building his own Dragonfly at Larkman's using traditional construction methods. (See The Deben 49 for the story.)

Anne Moore

## What's that bird?

It's amazing how a walk along the river is always different – the time of day; the weather and the people.

Late afternoon. The early morning mist had returned in a dense grey, but the woman standing next to me agreed, 'there was something about the air here by the river'. Her boys ran up saying, "Look at all those little birds, what are they?"; "Dunlin", I intoned, "or Knot," adding, "I can only tell the difference in flight, when they turn".

Their Father, who knew a bit about birds, had come alongside. "They're not Terns," he said, "I know" I replied, "they're Dunlin or Knot, but I can only tell the difference in flight, as they turn in a tight knot!" and we laughed.. "Show them the birds back there on the stony mud just below the wall, they're Ringed Plovers I think, but there's a board further along that tells you what they all are" and they went on their way.

Deciding to confirm that the "Ringed Plover" wasn't a "collared" something, I too made for the information board. The birds that I'd seen were illustrated there as what seemed to be a pair and feeding off the ground. Numbered twelve in the legend, they were listed as Turnstone! The legend, however, stated Ringed Plover was at number 4, so, unable to see clearly with my cold and watery eyes, I summoned the help of a nearby young man, who pointed at the pair in the picture. "But it says they're Turnstones" "No, one is, the other is the Ringed Plover". So, I now knew what the birds feeding among the stones were . . . there is always something to learn in this dynamic place.. "They haven't shown an Egret on here have they?", the young man continued. "No", and I suggested that the board had been erected before Egrets were widely seen here on this river. "At one time

there would be great excitement if only one was seen and that was rare. Now, I'm told, there is a colony of them, in the creek.." "There're two in the field on the other side" he said, pointing down river.

But, as I walked on down I saw that the 'Egrets' the young man had seen across the river, were most definitely Swans – so there you are! - feeding on the field across the water.



Photo Mick Wright

Little Egret

Anne has since discovered that there are Egrets on the Board, listed under "L", as Little Egrets!

## David Bucknell

### Settler and Billy – the last Trinity House Pilots at the Ferry Part Two - Settler

Settler was born at the Ferry the son of Edward 'Gager' Newson in 1898. He served in the first war in the mounted artillery. He was invalided out of the army and sent to a hospital in Southampton where he was nursed by Lilian Goosey who he subsequently married. Before moving to the Ferry to be a fisherman he learned the skills of bricklaying. Settler apparently told his new wife that he had a house at the Ferry. This turned out to be an old army 'bell' tent which he and Lilian lived in for two years. They then moved into a shed at the back of Victoria Cottages known as Cosy Corner. The shed was taken down; one part is still at Gulpher Road and the other was resurrected and is still beside the Sailing Club.



Settler is also remembered fondly by many people. He was tall 6' 1" and never put on weight and would generally be seen wearing his pilots hat and always wore a

collar and tie. He used to smoke 'Darky Brown' and drink bottles of 'Cobbles Dark Brown'. The smell of the smoke was so bad that he had to smoke outside his house and often the smoke could be seen coming from between the timbers of the outside privy; sadly when, in later life, Settler went into a residential home his smoking was banned all together.



Settler apparently got his name because 'once he settled, it was bloody hard to shift him.' He would never do today what he could put off till tomorrow. In a boat he was always relaxed and would never panic; he would go out in any weather and always able to cope with whatever was thrown at him.

He was a regular in the Victoria and one of his favourite phrases after a piloting job was 'Now we've got enough to lift the latch.' In the days before the flood bank was built at the Ferry, Settler would sit by the window of The Victoria watching the boats on the Deben bar waiting for a pilot. He

would see them waiting for the tide and they would have to anchor or heave to. That would give Settler a couple of hours in the Vic but he always seemed OK when he had to go out and sometimes bring in three boats at a time. After the bank was built he would instruct Felix to come and get him if a boat needed a pilot.

This was also the period when yachting for pleasure was taking off and both Settler and Billy taught locals to row and sail. Settler was very popular with the local yachtsmen and the 'Toffs' would come from London to meet 'real people' like Settler. They would arrange to meet him in the Victoria after sailing and Settler it seems was never short of a pint.



He is remembered fondly by his children for being a placid and kind father who 'never got really riled.' He could be firm at times but was never angry or rough with them. Apparently he was not such a diligent husband and did almost nothing around the

house or with the children. Richard says that after Settler had been fishing, his wife had to intercept him between the beach and the Victory if she was going to have any money for the housekeeping. As Joan says Lilian carried the family, working hard to make ends meet. She always returned to Southampton to have her children and this involved transporting the whole family. She also had to cycle into Felixstowe to get what rations the family could afford.

Settler was known to be the slowest cycle rider at the Ferry. His journeys back from the Victoria were renowned but as far as we know he used to get home although on one occasion ended up in a ditch by the garden gate. People would watch Settler leaving the Ferry 'tacking' down the road on his bike. Folklore says that on one occasion he fell off his bike and the cataracts he was suffering from fell out and he was cured.

In the 53 flood Settler and Jack Newson, Clifford's brother, who was said to be able to throw a stone from one side of the river to the other, being the best oarsmen at the Ferry, volunteered to rescue families from the marsh in a 15 foot punt. The first rescue from the Marsh House was in the lee of the higher ground and this was accomplished relatively easily. However, in the second they had to row in the teeth of a force 8-9 gale to the exposed house by the Kingsfleet. It took them nearly an hour to reach the house. The couple were up stairs with the water lapping around their feet. The gentleman weighed 18 stone and his wife was a similar weight. Settler could not get the couple out of the window and eventually they had to take the frame out. When they got them into the boat there was so little freeboard they had to drift with the wind, steering with the oars to get the

couple to safety. They also led to safety a number of Suffolk Punch horses. Settler was awarded the Queens Commendation for Brave Conduct (the 'laurel leaves'.)



The Pilot's Hut Settler with Billy

All the children remember that it was a hard life at the Ferry making ends meet. Settler and Billy supplemented their fishing and piloting with beach combing. There were many wrecks off Felixstowe and tea, tobacco and tinned food was regularly washed up. (On one occasion an intact piano was washed up.) Settler is remembered for finding a hoard of tinned food which he transported back to the Ferry on an old pram. When he passed the Coastguard lookout in the Martello the wheels fell off. Once he was also chased after he had found a boarding ladder on the beach which he attempted to hide in his house. His wife would not let him or his pursuers in and he was left struggling to get in through a window to escape. The room at the back of the Victoria was the favoured venue for sorting out the spoils.

After he retired Settler received a pension from Trinity House of £200 a month and this helped 'lift the latch'. He became a gardener and took great delight in his 'ride on' mower working for a lady who started

the British School of Motoring. (Felix questions this and says that Billy only received £1 a week start with)

Settler clearly had a remarkable constitution given his consumption of tobacco and alcohol. Shortly before he died his doctor jokingly said to George 'He's pickled himself! He's smoked and drank so much nothing can get at him. I'll have to put him down.' George was still taking him to the pub six months before he died at 93 when he eventually died of cancer. On his last visit he asked where all his friends had gone!

*My thanks to George Newson, Richard Chapman and David Gorden Jones. David has information on the Woodbridge Pilots and John Hampton the curator of The Woodbridge Museum is helping to research material which we hope will provide the basis for a future article.*



Model of the 'Bittern' the Newson's pilot boat before motor boats were used.

## EAST ANGLIA ONE ON-SHORE CABLE WORKS

East Anglia ONE is an offshore windfarm being developed by East Anglia Offshore Wind (a joint venture between Scottish-Power Renewables Ltd and Vattenfall Wind Power Ltd). Once the power is generated it will be connected to the National Grid by a 110km cable (73km offshore and 37km onshore). The cable will make landfall at Bawdsey and will be buried underground for its entire length to the existing Bramford substation. East Anglia ONE will generate 1,200 MW of power, enough green energy for 660,000 homes. The proposal to develop East Anglia ONE is currently being examined by the Planning Inspectorate with a decision expected in June 2014. If consent is granted onshore work on the cable will begin in 2016.

The route from Bawdsey to Bramford requires the cable to cross barriers such as

ivers, roads and railways and in some cases to do this the project team has proposed using a special engineering technique called Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD). HDD is a means of drilling under obstacles and by so doing avoid disruption as well as minimising the environmental impact of laying the cables.

The HDD equipment collectively is called a rig and it is brought to the drilling location mounted on a lorry. The crew then works within a compound of about 50m by 50m. As the head of the drill bores underground it is steered along a pre-determined path by an operator who can accurately determine the point that the drill will emerge on the other side of the obstacle. The bore path would be designed to pass through the most favourable geology whilst avoiding disturbance to infrastructure such as drainage ditches and flood defences. Once the hole has been created, ducts are then drawn back through it, pulled by the drill rig. The duct is capped at both ends to

prevent the ingress of unwanted soil and mud, and the installed duct is then carefully buried at either end to await the installation of the cable.

HDD is proposed at a total of nine sites, including under the Bawdsey Cliff (thereby avoiding any disturbance to the coastal cliffs), under the River Deben, the East Suffolk Railway Line and the A12 (in each case to avoid any disruption to traffic



and transport) and under the environmentally sensitive areas of Kirton Creek and Martlesham Creek.

As well as the cables for East Anglia ONE, the project also involves installing ducts for the installation of future projects from the East Anglia Zone. These projects have been named East Anglia THREE and East Anglia FOUR. Each project will require up to four power cables to be laid. This means that a total of twelve ducts could be required from the Bawdsey landfall site to the connection point at Bramford. The time that it takes for each HDD operation depends on the location, but for the 750m-

## Jet Skis on the Deben -an alternative!

We could always go for a jet ski friendly river and suggest to all of those sailors who don't like it to go to the Alde and Ore. A bit of specialisation. Go for it say I, at least jetskis are compact and they don't require moorings.

One must think strategically about this David and not be so parochial. Now if we considered the Ore Alde, Deben and Stour Orwell as three separate and complimentary zones we could suggest that Felixstowe Harwich are totally inappropriate for little boats dodging back and forth in the wind playing chicken with leviathans, so here we make a rule of only boats that drive in straight lines.



Drilling rig in place

The Deben would be emptied of moorings and become the sports boat river with ramps, slaloms etc. The Ore Alde would then be reserved for the conservative old guard with their sticks and sails where they at least will be able to hear each other shouting about rights of way, because motors will be banned.

Smart idea huh!

Anon

800m bore under the River Deben, the programme estimates it would take up to five months.

More information about the EA ONE project, including the cable route and all the proposed HDD sites, can be found at: <http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk>



# 'Artists and Writers'

## Robert Simper

Robert Simper has now published his 39th book documenting the rivers and estuaries and working sailing boats of the East Coast. His knowledge of the Deben is second to none and he has done more to document the characters and crafts associated with the Deben than any one. Most of you will have one or more of his books.

Robert was born in Blaxhall into several generations of Simper farmers who had been farmers in Suffolk since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Robert left Bawdsey school to go to St Edmunds school where his teacher nicknamed him 'My little Suffolk Dumpling,' prompting Robert to abandon his Suffolk accent. Later he trained at Royal Cirencester Agricultural College and joined his father Norman Simper in the family business which had moved to Manor Farm Bawdsey.

In his latest book '*Best Crop*' Robert talks about the tensions involved in a young farmer succeeding his father. They clearly had different styles, priorities and models of authority. Norman Simper had built the business and was used to the almost 'feudal' organisation of farming prior to 1960. He was wedded to horses and was reluctant to accept the need for change and to adapt to modern methods and technology and the need for flexibility in modern farming that Robert brought with him. Anyone who has been involved in family businesses will resonate with Robert's account and anyone who is not familiar with farming will get an insight into how relatively small farmers have had to diversify and adapt in order to survive. Robert's son Jonathon who has taken over the day to day running of the farm business

says that Robert has learned from his own experience how to run a family business.

Roberts's 'epiphany' as a writer occurred in the early sixties when he injured his back unloading farm produce. After years of trying to recover, his doctor told him he had to stop the heavy work around the farm and do something else. Robert thought 'OK I will be a writer'. Like his mother he had always been an avid reader of books and stories but he hadn't written much before then. He did write a journal and began to write articles for magazines and newspapers including articles about travel for the Sunday Telegraph.



James Wentworth Day came across one of Robert's articles 'Your spelling is awful, your grammar is worse but you do know how to put a story together. You've got that thing we all want.' He commissioned six articles which was an important boost for Robert and he 'got a cheque' for them. Recently, Robert was giving a talk and a lady introduced herself to him as his old school teacher, Mrs Pinch. She said he could still tell a good story remembering that Robert used to tell stories to his school mates after 'lights out'. Miss Pinch would listen outside the door and think 'Oh, they're OK they're listening to Robert's stories.'

Since 1969 when Robert's first book was published, Robert has published nearly a book a year. He always has one or more books 'on the go' and is constantly picking up bits of information, stories and pictures wherever he goes which might provide material for a future book. He has written a column in the magazine *Sea Breezes* for 48 years.

I commented to Robert that one of the things that are characteristic of his books is that while he documents a historical narrative of the subject he is writing about, the narrative is always interwoven with stories and anecdotes of the people who worked the boats of the rivers and estuaries he is writing about. Robert said he was influenced by the work of Hervey Benham who he says did not have a son and was always generous and encouraging. Robert regards '*Down Tops!*' as his bible. Hervey Benham was able to detail the designs and rigs of sailing ships and then follow their description with anecdotes about the characters who used to sail them. He encouraged Robert to take on his 'mantle' and Robert has done this to great effect.

As a schoolboy Robert had seen a picture of a pirate's galleon with a ship's wheel and this stayed with him for years. Later his uncle John Garrard a descendent of the Woodbridge boatbuilders, was given the 'Lassie', an open boat built by Robertson, Garrard's old yard. When about thirteen years old Robert used to go trawling with John Garrard in the 'Lassie' which leaked a bit, so that it became his job to row across the river at Ramsholt and pump her out.

Norman bought Robert a Waldringfield Dragonfly which Robert raced with 'a total lack of success'. He also used to row a clinker built boat, Swallow, with Pearl to places on the river. He did some racing on

modern boats but developed an interest in Thames Barges, sailing on them whenever he got the time. He was encouraged by Peter Light a barge skipper who said to Robert 'We have got to look after these things!' and Robert took up the cause getting involved in various restoration projects including sailing barges the Dawn and the Cambria.

An interest in gaff rigged boats stemmed from there and Robert built up what he refers to as a capital reserve' from his own sideline, a pig farm venture, to buy a converted ship's lifeboat '*Sea Fever*' which Robert sailed all round the East Coast and to the continent. Since then he has had series of traditional wooden boats and developed his interest in lug sailed boats



Three Sisters

including his own '*Three Sisters*'. He has a base in Looe where he is working to support the efforts to celebrate the Cornish Lugger. In 1963 he was one of the founding members of the Old Gaffers Association and in 2010 The World Ship Trust awarded him a citation 'for many years of helping to record so much of the country's vintage sailing craft.'

Recently Robert was involved in the Sutton Hoo Society and this led to an interest in

the Woodbridge Ferry which Robert re-opened and ran for a time.

Roberts books are a testament to his love of the 'visual image'. Robert says if he hadn't been a writer he would have liked to be an art dealer 'discovering old masters'. Robert now has a huge collection of photographs and has taken up photography himself. He is very particular about the photographs he takes and will think nothing of returning to a place over



and over again to get the right picture. He also paints but says that because he is no good he doesn't do much now.

Robert and Pearl, 'Pearlo', married and moved to Plum Tree Hall 55 years ago. It had no electricity. He wasn't, as his friends thought, suffering from delusions of grandeur calling it a 'hall' but remembered that traditionally, as a kind of 'Suffolk joke,' out of the way places were called 'halls'. (See Fisherman's Hall at the Ferry.)

Pearl made a decision to join Robert in all his projects. Her father was a champion ploughman and quite late in life, much to the chagrin of her daughters, Pearl learned to drive a tractor and help with arable cultivations. She was an accomplished 'potter' and became the farm secretary,

typing Robert's work. Now she is his unofficial editor telling him when his writing 'is boring'. As Robert says 'She does all the work and I make all the noise.'

Robert enjoys the peace and tranquillity of Plum Tree Hall but acknowledges the need for wider horizons. He travels widely. Once sitting at Plum Tree Hall looking out over the snow for several days Robert announced 'Come on Pearlo we're going to Africa to study Dhows' and they did. Last year they have visited Russia, Estonia, Denmark, Finland and Sweden.

The shell fishery project which Jonathon and grandson Harry started three years ago with Robert's support illustrates Robert's feeling for the family. This is a tradition which stems from his Grandmother Margaret who always managed to include every family member whatever their views and Robert continues to have her belief that family members support each other and this can include finding jobs and supporting projects. The project has also relied on traditional boats although finding the right one, 'fit for purpose' has not always been easy.

When you meet Robert he always provides a commentary on the people, events, and institutions around him whether it is the Environment Agency, Suffolk Coastal District Council or the DEP. He is analytical and can be quite critical but it is always with a light touch and humour. His point of view particularly about the river is always worth listening to. He is currently documenting the impact of the surge on The Deben and this will make interesting reading.

Robert's projects over the years have exemplified his own values and his interest in people and their stories. He values the entrepreneurial spirit and individual initiative and he celebrates this in his books remembering the people and their

craft skills who made the river. Generally they are the people who worked the river rather than the rich or famous. At the same time Robert does not have much time for bureaucracy.



L'Atalanta which Robert Simper owned for 23 years

Robert is Chair of Ramsholt Parish Meeting, is involved in the DEP and is Commodore of Bawdsey Haven Yacht Club. His hope, and it is a hope rather than an aspiration, that the Deben will remain much the same but fears that there are many people who want to intervene for one reason or another. Of his love of the river Deben he says 'I am happiest exploring the creeks and poking about the saltings. They are never the same.' While there are many more beautiful rivers in Britain he simply says of the Deben 'It is home'.

In an introduction to one of Robert's books I read how he met a friend at a funeral and they reminisced about what

their school Abbotsholm had given them. They both agreed that one of the qualities it had encouraged was to have the confidence and belief to do what you enjoyed and what you were good at, rather than pursuing success or ambition.

Reviewing the many facets of Robert's career it is clear that he epitomises this belief.

David Bucknell

My thanks to Robert and Pearl



Pet, Teddy and Three Sisters

## BOATS OF THE DEBEN

### Linda and Jon Wilkins *Barnacle Bill - NZL 1710*

I wonder how many of you that frequent the River Deben have looked at this beautiful boat and wondered who brought her from her inscribed home port of Auckland to a swinging mooring just upstream from Ramsholt. Well we certainly questioned just that when we first saw her there nearly twenty years ago. We imagined expatriate Kiwis temporarily living locally after sailing half way round the world and we frequently detoured half



way across the river to circle her and show friends our image of a perfect sailing boat. Never, at that stage, did it occur to us that

we would be the proud owners of *Barnacle Bill* some ten years later.

We also remember well the first time that we were taken sailing in *Barnacle Bill* as her prospective new owners. At that time we were considering making the transition from a light-displacement, skittish, 10m fibreglass racing hull to this ocean-going thoroughbred which was described to us as being 'as stiff as old boots' and 'one of the fastest boats on the east coast'. Now, after ten years of ownership we can attest to the former claim since she consistently cuts a steady swathe through the roughest seas we have encountered and we do, of course adhere to the latter claim since she started life as a racer and is certainly quick!

As memorable as that first experience of *Barnacle Bill* still is because of her exceptional balance and performance in the strong winds on that day, it also brought several surprises. As just explained we had previously admired her classic Sparkman and Stevens (S&S) profile, with low free-board, exaggerated tumble home and modest coach roof, from a distance and naively assumed she was of relatively modern fibreglass construction. So surprise one was to find a hull constructed completely from wood and surprise two was her open-plan interior with eight tight berths (for her original racing crew), a galley equipped with gimballed shelving and no cabins to speak of. We were soft in those days and used to multi-cabined privacy with dual heads.

Many sleepless nights followed this first encounter and initially our search for a "perfect" long distance cruising yacht continued. There was the skipper's need for a boat that sailed fast with

minimal crew and went up-wind and the mate's yearning for that too but combined with more internal comfort. Whilst looking at other boats we also began to research *Barnacle Bill's* history and pedigree. An early discovery was that her timber hull is constructed from three, cold-moulded layers of kauri planking laid on glue-laminated kauri ribs spaced at nine inch centres. Kauri is widely accepted as the best boat-building wood in the world, it comes from an exceptionally slow growing tree; it has a very tight grain, bends well and takes fastenings. Kauri is almost impervious to rot and is resistant to marine borers; it has been highly prized for boat-building for centuries and ancient kauri forests in New Zealand, which are now protected, were widely plundered in the past, even by the British Navy. The hull has been externally sheathed with fibreglass cloth and epoxy resin since new and shows no signs of deterioration. The regular, glue-laminated ribs complete a stiff hull that is well balanced by its elegant fin keel that is constructed from lead and finished with a bronze shoe; the rudder is well protected by its skeg mounting.

It is unusual for an S&S racing design to incorporate a coach roof that provides ample internal headroom, even in the forepeak, but we discovered that her original owner had specified this feature as opposed to the normal S&S racing profile with a flush deck in order to allow for a subsequent life as a Pacific cruiser. Wind tunnel tests followed and, by lowering her free-board and adding a modest coach roof an early racer-cruiser was born. As an aside some of you may be familiar with Eric Hiscock's reference to *Barnacle Bill* in his 1981 edition of *Cruising Under Sail*. He encountered her while cruising the Society Islands in 1979 when she was crewed by subsequent owners Jim and Donna Dirksen, together with their young family and others. Hiscock remarks that "heavy displacement is not essential for gracious

living" (implying that at 12 tons he classed *Barnacle Bill* as light displacement!); he also commented that "there appeared to be comfortable room for all the crew".

Anyway after those early sleepless nights we did decide to purchase *Barnacle Bill* and have never regretted that decision. Early trips to the Netherlands, Brittany and the Channel Isles while we were both working soon led to a five year circuit of various Atlantic destinations together with extensive exploration of the Mediterranean from Morocco to Turkey and further south to Crete. One interesting fact about owning an older classic yacht is that they invariably come with a history and as current owners we became part of that history, even while living in the present and dreaming of plans for the future. We believe that *Barnacle Bill* is a special yacht and this had been made even more apparent to us by the frequent appearance of Kiwis who have recognised *Barnacle Bill* as one of their cherished Admiral's Cup boats. More than once we have been at anchor when there has been a knock on the hull and a call for *Barnacle Bill* resulting in a New Zealander climbing

# KIWIS ARE CUP FAVORITES

Big Boat New Zealand team should make the racing in the nine-man Southern Cross Cup series for 1973. *Photo Campbell reports*



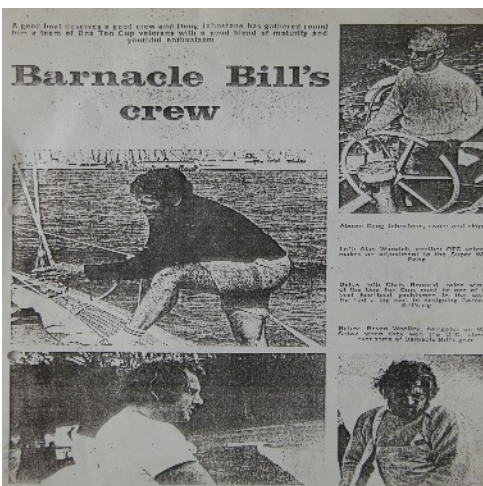
For example, British Eric Twycross of Whiting Bay, at the New Zealand sea club, has sailed 160,000 miles. The team, consisting of four men, has been organized by the Southern Cross Cup of Great Britain and is now competing for the trophy.

The team consists of: Billie, Long, King, New Zealand, New South Wales, Australia and U.S.A.

What is it all about? In answer, it is the oldest racing cup in the world, and it has been sailed since 1870. The cup is named after a Kiwi, who was the first to sail it. The cup is now sailed in 1973, and the team is expected to win it.

This 28.5-tonnet *Barnacle Bill*, built by the late Sir John Lister, has sailed 160,000 miles in 1973. She is now sailing for the Southern Cross Cup of Great Britain.

aboard to yarn about their beloved S&S yachts. On one occasion we met the owner of an S&S One Tonner with the same vintage as *Barnacle Bill* called *Young Nick*. We subsequently found articles about *Young Nick* and other Kiwi S&S classics from the 1970's in a New Zealand boating magazine where *Barnacle Bill* was referred to and her location in the world was queried. We also learnt that many of the crew that sailed *Young Nick* in the OTC campaigns also crewed *Barnacle Bill* in the Admiral's Cup series, including the Southern Cross and the Fastnet race.



For those who are interested in a bit more of *Barnacle Bill's* history she was originally commissioned by her first owner, Doug Johnstone, to compete in the 1973 Southern Cross Series leading to selection for the Kiwi's Admiral's Cup Series in 1975 that included the 50<sup>th</sup> Fastnet Race. She was built by Keith Dobson at Taupo in the South Island of New Zealand. Graeme Johnstone, the son of the original owner has confirmed these details and says that in both events *Barnacle Bill* was able to out sail other top boats which had cost significantly more to build. A newspaper article headlined "*KIWIS ARE CUP FAVOURITES - Big-boat New Zealand*

*should make the running in the nine-team Southern Cross Cup series for 1973'* reported that the New Zealand team was chosen after 14 selection races and that the Kiwis had three new Sparkman and Stephens designs in *Inca*, *Barnacle Bill* and *Quicksilver*. *Barnacle Bill* was considered to be an example of how New Zealand had applied their small boat techniques to the big ones and would pose a threat to their competitors in the 1973 Southern Cross Cup series and The Admirals Cup in 1975. Another newspaper article "*BARNACLE BILL'S CREW*" reports "A good boat deserves a good crew and Doug Johnstone has gathered around him a team of One Ton Cup veterans with a good blend of maturity and youthful enthusiasm."

By the time of the Admirals Cup in 1975 *Barnacle Bill* had been sold to a new owner, a famous All-Black rugby player, Ron Jarden who, after a relatively brief playing career, retired at 26 and subsequently took up sailing in 1974 after a friend had apparently taken him gliding and he liked the effect of wind on a craft. He bought *Barnacle Bill* and by the following year had mastered sailing to such an extent that he won the right to represent New Zealand in the Admiral's Cup Series in Great Britain. The Royal Port Nicholson Yacht Club in Wellington makes reference in its historical record to one of its members Ron Jarden winning a place in NZ's Admiral Cup Team with *Barnacle Bill*.

Graeme Johnstone says that Ron retained the same crew one of whom, Robert McClelland, writes that, "he was privileged to sail *Barnacle Bill* from 1973 to 1975, culminating in the 1975 Admiral's Cup and the 50<sup>th</sup> edition of the Fastnet Race". He recalls the owner, Ron Jarden, "driving from Wellington on Friday nights in his Porsche to sail and train on the next day". Robert McClelland describes *Barnacle Bill* as "a great yacht and very well built". He recalled one time when the crew needed

more room to pack sails below so they cut the heads door in half; a quirky feature that *Barnacle Bill* retains to this day.

*Barnacle Bill* was bought by James Dirksen (an American from Taipan Enterprises Incorporated who was living in Wellington) after Ron Jarden died suddenly of a heart attack in February 1977; a *Bill of Sale*, dated 25<sup>th</sup> August 1977, is certified by the American Consul for the Port of Wellington. We have learnt from James Dirksen's son Michael Hearn, via a website blog that they again inherited the former crew and his father continued racing *Barnacle Bill* and represented New Zealand up to the 1977 Southern Cross Cup. By then *Barnacle Bill* was a little outdated compared to newer yachts at the time and they didn't do so well, however the Auckland team kept the cup for New Zealand. Michael's father then retired from racing and together with his mother and sister, the family cruised the South Pacific for two years before sailing on to Australia where they lived for the next four years. Letters and correspondence with Hood New Zealand dated 1<sup>st</sup> September 1977 records *Barnacle Bill's* extensive sail inventory and preparations for the family cruise to the South Pacific. It details Hood's recommendations to James Dirksen for a short-handed cruising rig, including modifications to the huge spinnakers that she still carries today, along with the spanker and flanker. The author writes, "Your decision to keep to the designer's original sail plan outline will, in future sailing, prove wise and satisfying. As you commented yourself, you don't have to fill the whole rig up with sails, but in light conditions it's nice to have the power when it is needed." The correspondence reflects the very same issues that we ponder today when making plans for a cruising voyage; which of *Barnacle Bill's* large inventory of sails to take to compliment roller furling systems which have now replaced some of the original rig.

*Barnacle Bill* was exported by freight to England in 1983 (this must have been the second occasion that *Barnacle Bill* had been shipped to the UK but we do not have records of the first in 1975) when the owner James Dirksen moved to live in the UK where he remained for eight years until he passed away with cancer. Michael, his son, says that *Barnacle Bill* was then sold, although he did not know to whom, and that he has lots of memorabilia of *Barnacle Bill*, including a Yacht of the Year newspaper article, articles in Yachting World magazines when she was built, articles from the Wellington Times, yacht club memberships for Evans Bay, Sydney and Hobart, as well as log books. We hope to meet up with him soon and share our experiences of *Barnacle Bill*.



We have a copy of the Customs Import Certification of *Barnacle Bill* dated 27<sup>th</sup> September 1983 and Tilbury Docks was the place of discharge on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 1983.



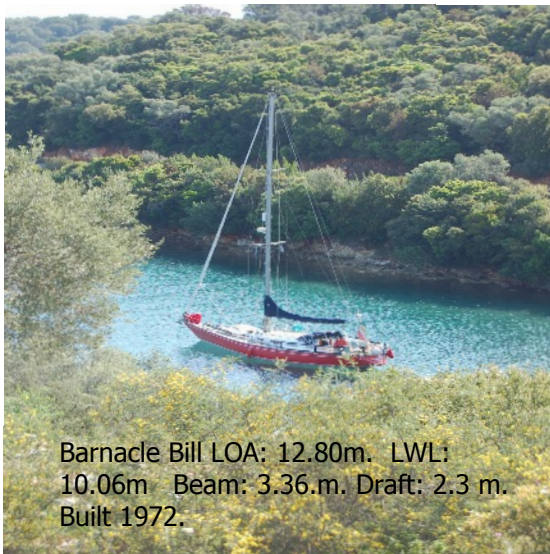
It is staggering to read that the cost of freight charges and VAT totalled nearly £50,000; James Dirksen must have been a man who loved his boat! Records suggest that *Barnacle Bill* remained sitting in her freight cradle until 1993 (alongside her substantial alloy mast) in Suttons Boatyard at Great Wakering, near Southend until she was found and purchased by Chris Gerard on the 27th October 1993. One can only wonder why *Barnacle Bill* was never commissioned on her arrival to the UK after taking such lengths to freight her here. Chris Gerrard certainly saved her at a time when she could so easily have slipped beyond economic repair. After repair and modification he then raced her in the Orwell and cruised to Sweden on several occasions.

Following one other brief change of ownership we acquired *Barnacle Bill* more than ten years ago and have continued to improve and update her (hopefully without sacrificing too many of her original design features) in order to ensure that she remains a safe, comfortable and fast cruising yacht. In October 2011, after five years full time living aboard, we sailed *Barnacle Bill* upstream on a high Spring Tide to Mel and Simon Skeet's yard at Melton to embark on a two year re-fit programme. The decks and cockpit were re-teaked first and despite over 40 years of wear and tear we found the sub-deck to be dry and intact making our job a whole lot easier. Internal modifications followed; more recently we have swapped the Hydrovane for a more powerful Wind Pilot, then there have been the rigging modifications, new sails, gantry, bigger solar panels, red re-spray and so on! There is always work to be done on a yacht especially when cruising and this is by far the longest period that we have had *Barnacle Bill* out of the water; usually it has been for a week to complete the

annual antifoul or, when we are in UK waters, to lay-up over the winter. She will be re-launched this spring and will initially lie on her mooring near Hemley under the ever watchful eye of George Collins, the Harbour Master.

One day soon we hope to sail *Barnacle Bill* back home to New Zealand; she is after all an expatriate and probably yearns to sail home waters again. Besides, there are a growing number of Kiwis who would love to see several of their Admirals Cup boats back; we will just have to watch out for attempts by some members of their Classic Boat Forum to try and repatriate *Barnacle Bill* under the Protected Objects Act; fortunately one blogger sensibly observes that the day such powers are used to keep classic boats like *Kahurangi*, *Ragtime* or *Barnacle Bill* in New Zealand will be the last day any Kiwi classic visits home waters. Such observations reflect the passion that remains for classic Kiwi yachts, particularly the ones that emigrated.

Linda and Jon Wilkins



Barnacle Bill LOA: 12.80m. LWL: 10.06m Beam: 3.36m. Draft: 2.3 m. Built 1972.

# Deben Reflections

Many thanks to all of you who contributed your Deben Reflections. Here are two examples. I hope this will inspire you to share your 'reflection'.



Unusual way to transport two school trunks, going P.L.A. [passenger luggage in advance], at the end of the school holidays, in the early 1950's.

My father, Canon Trevor Waller, my mother Nora Waller, myself Kit Clark nee Waller, my sister Julia Stroud nee Waller and our Labrador dog, Sailor, would wheel barrow our two trunks from Waldringfield Rectory to the beach, where they would be man handled into our father's dinghy and rowed out to his yacht, a Deben 4 tonner named Nora. We would sail up to Woodbridge, or motor if there was no wind.

From this photo, taken by my sister with her Box Brownie camera, we are rowing ashore at Woodbridge. Once ashore we would then trundle the trunks on the wheel barrow up to Woodbridge Station. The trunks would be booked in to go P.L.A.. That bit was always fun, the actual going back to school, which was in Staffordshire, was not much fun.

Kit Clark

Martlesham-Creek at Low Tide. I saw this group of posts which to me look like a Giacometti sculpture of a family group on an outing.

Nicki Holt



## Correspondence

### Billy

Following the article on Billy Newson, (The Deben 47) Rosie Beecher the granddaughter of Sir Cuthbert Quilter telephoned the Editor.

'I saw your piece about Billy in The Deben and thought I should contact you.

As a teenager I spent my summer holidays at Bawdsey Lodge with my grandmother. We were always going over to Felixstowe Ferry and I knew all the families at the Ferry. I got to know Billy well. He taught me how to row and as he was a good golfer he taught me to play golf.

When he wasn't piloting Billy would go lobstering. Caroline Edmonds, niece of the Langleys and I lived close to the Ferry and we would bike down to the quay. Billy would pick us up on the Bawdsey shore at approximately five am. according to the tide for crossing the bar in his a large clinker built open motor boat and we would go 'lobstering' with him.

Billy taught us how to bait the 'hoops' with rotten fish eggs. The hoops were thrown out, one dozen of them, in a circle which took about an hour and a half. We would continue casting the hoops until we had enough lobsters. The lobsters we caught were tied by the claws and Billy taught us to how do this – quite an art!

Afterwards we would go to his shed and he would make cups of tea and boil the lobsters. We collected the orders for grandmother and he would give us each a 'nancy' lobster (a little lobster under the legal size.)

Everyone knew Billy; he was a very likeable man – easy and outgoing. He would do

anything for anybody. Billy gathered people round him – people were drawn to him.'

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### Everson Kingfisher

Robin Digby Writes (For Forwarding)

Dear Mr Uloth,

I read with interest and enjoyment your article "Brief History of the Everson Kingfisher Dinghy" in The Deben 43, Autumn 2011. Together with my brother Patrick I sailed Puffin, KC 4, from 1952 to 1956. I remember your parents well, in fact we bought our house, The Old Malting House, from your parents and were neighbours to them for the five years we lived in Woodbridge. I can remember your father mending the mast of my model yacht.

With regard to your article on the Kingfisher, I remember that the first boat that Eversons built, Kingfisher KC1, had one plank more freeboard than the subsequent boats.

You mention the tendency of the Kingfisher bow to dig in. I can remember being hit by a squall while running and having to scramble aft to keep the bow from digging in.

When I looked at the Deben Yacht Club website I could find no mention of the Kingfisher class so I suppose that it has made way to more modern plastic boats.

Thank you for your article, it provoked many memories.

Best regards,

Robin Digby

Ramlösavägen  
Helsingborg  
Sweden



River Deben Association

## **Annual General Meeting**

Thursday 3 April 2014 7.30 pm.

Woodbrige Community Hall

The AGM will be followed by a talk:

## **'The Upper Reaches of the Deben'**

By Mark Mitchell

Mark Mitchell taught English and History at Woodbrige School as well as being Head of Cultural Studies. He has become involved in many local history projects and is a guide at Sutton Hoo. He is a photographer and author and his published works include 'Suffolk a Portrait in Colour'. He lectures on a wide range of topics most recently 'The Royal Navy in the Victorian Era'