

# The Deben



49 Autumn 2014



# The Deben

49 Autumn 2014

- 4. **Editorial**
- 5. **Chairman's Report.**
- 7. **Will Green's First Committee Meeting** - Anne Moore
- 8. **News from the Hards** - Anne Moore, David Bucknell.
- 10. **The Journey Towards a Deben Estuary Plan** - Christine Block
- 11. **The 2013 Floods** - Robert Simper
- 14. **Jacoba and the Tidal Surge** - Simon Read
- 16. **The Deben Estuary - After the Surge** - Karen Thomas EA.
- 19. **Have you seen this man?** - David Bucknell
- 20. **Repair of the River Walls following the Tidal Surge** - Robin Whittle
- 24. **How The Deben was Saved!** - Denzil Cowdry
- 25. **Memories of Kirton Creek** - Jane Bradburn
- 28. **Bawdsey Man Accused of Murder** - Peter Wain
- 31. **Artists of the Deben - Annie Turner** - James Skellorn
- 33. **Boats of the Deben - 'Nirvana'** - Pete Clay
- 36. **Deben Reflections - Holidays in Waldringfield** - Liz Kennedy
- 37. **Correspondence**
- 38. **Officers and Committee**
- Back Page - **Autumn Meeting**

Cover: David Green's painting of rudders at Everson's.

(David Green has always been fascinated by rudders, the power they evoke, their unique shapes and the way they complement boats, and his pictures.)



## Editorial

Following the Second World War much of the legislation aimed at protecting and safeguarding the public interest in relation to the countryside, parks, habitats, footpaths, rivers and coasts was passed. The Town and Country Planning Act was passed in 1946 and this still underpins planning activity today. Although they have gone through different reincarnations many of the institutions which today still play an important role such as the AONB, Natural England (SSSI's), the Environment Agency have their origins in the post war period. This has been supplemented by European legislation aimed at protecting many aspects of the environment and natural habitat.

One can discern a number of trends since then. The agencies became larger, employed more staff, became more bureaucratic, exercising more power and increased reach in many aspects of life. Gone are the days when families at the Ferry expected to be flooded; the Newsons even had a boat tied up behind their bungalow, just in case!

The tide turned in 1979; since when successive governments have cut down on public expenditure. This trend was exacerbated by further cut backs in government spending, at central and local level, following the banking crisis.

Some of you will not be unsympathetic to these developments as many felt that some of the agencies had become 'overblown' and were intervening in too many aspects of our lives and exercising unnecessary and unwanted power and control.

However, our expectations of agencies such as the Environment Agency have increased; flooding and coastal erosion has become unacceptable. Perhaps we have reached a point where our expectations have increased to unrealistic levels.

Many question the role of the Environment Agency and other statutory agencies in this new environment. The pressure on our coast and estuaries may be increasing while resources are decreasing. This has necessitated new thinking and led to new solutions involving private and public partnerships. This in turn offers new challenges to the impartiality of public bodies like planning authorities, when an application is made as a consequence of the authority no longer being able to fund projects.

What is happening on The Deben provides examples of some of these changes as well as the responses both of the agencies and of local people. In this edition of 'The Deben' we have some interesting illustrations.

Suffolk Coastal has drawn back on its support for public facilities and places and this has led to the de facto 'privatisation' of Bawdsey Quay and the extraordinary efforts Bawdsey Parish Council is going to, in sponsoring a café and visitors centre, in order to fund the 'amenity car park and associated toilets' which is primarily a regional facility.

Christine Block outlines the progress that is being made toward completing the DEP and this might be seen as a more 'local' and less centralised approach to planning in the Deben Estuary. Robert Simper and Simon Read provide examples of the

subjective experience of the surge, as well as examples of individuals taking responsibility, given due warning, in the face of a crisis. Karen Thomas, as well as information about the surge, gives an account of how the policies and practice of the Environment Agency in relation to coastal and river flood protection is developing in a more responsive and flexible way. Robin Whittle provides a comprehensive account of the steps that have been taken post surge to repair breaches and this illustrates the new partnerships and local initiatives, which are being forged between agencies such as the Environment Agency and local landowners. Denzil Cowdry reminds us of why flying at Bentwaters is such a hot issue for many members of the RDA. If you are thinking of joining the Committee Anne Moore's account of a recent meeting is required reading.

'Sprit of Place' is epitomised in Jane Bradburn's account of Kirton Creek and Peter Wain writes about the 'darker side' of Bawdsey. James Skellorn provides an account of how the Deben offers inspiration to Annie Turner as an artist. Pete Clay provides an account of his beautifully restored and maintained 'Nirvana' designed by Albert Strange, who showed how an artist can utilise artistic abilities in a practical field of yacht design. Finally, Liz Kennedy in her Deben Reflection give us all hope as she sets sail on the Deben at 85.

All of them share an appreciation of the Deben.

I hope more of you will contribute your Deben Reflections so we can compile a volume to celebrate 25 years of the RDA next year.



River Deben Association

Robin Whittle

## Chairman's Report

It has been a good summer for sailors and I hope you have enjoyed it as much as Gillie and me. Apart from many days on the Deben picnicking at Ramsholt, the Rocks and Tips, we have had a fortnight sailing in our Cornish Shrimper around the coast of Brittany in glorious sun.

There have been a number of significant concerns for your Committee since my last report in April. Much work has been carried out by landowners to repair and upgrade the river wall in several different places, some of which is recorded in this edition of 'The Deben'.

**River Users' Code Leaflet:** Copies of this leaflet have now been distributed to all the Harbour Masters along the river and are being handed to all local and visiting yachts and motor cruisers. It has also been distributed to many of the marinas in Essex so that visiting yachtsmen can be made aware of the AONB of the Deben. I have had meetings with the Harbour Masters and Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) and following these have prepared a 'template' letter for situations of anti-social behaviour.

**Whisstocks Project:** Demolition has been delayed until this autumn. One of the reasons for this is because of a late request by the Developer for a variation in the planning application. The Developer claims that he had not realised that the building for holiday accommodation would accrue VAT and accordingly asked that this building should be changed to permanent residences. The RDA wrote to the SCDC stating that, although the RDA remained in support of the overall concept for Redevelopment of the Whisstocks Site, it was concerned about a change to the Planning Agreement and the effect that it may have on future planning applications with regard to land adjacent to the river.

**Saltmarshes:** Members of the RDA Committee, with support from Carol Reid, have now completed the first survey of Loder's Cut Island. This includes measurement from twelve posts, which have been inserted around the edge of the island saltmarsh. Carol has provided photographs and a survey of the vegetation around each post. The current intention is to repeat the survey at six monthly intervals. Members of the RDA Committee have been invited to join a Deben Estuary Partnership working group to consider saltmarshes and how dredging material can be used to enhance them.

**Bentwaters Park Planning Application:** This application included a section related to flying. An email was sent out to RDA members alerting them to the application and giving information on how to find out more about the flying aspects and the contact

details of the Planning Officer. In July a letter was sent to the Planning Officer noting that the Association is concerned that any increase in flying activities at Bentwaters would disturb the tranquillity of the AONB of the River Deben.

**Deben Estuary Plan:** There have been further delays to the publication of this document which is very frustrating for those who have been involved in its production. Once it has been published there will then be a period in which the community will be asked to make comments before it is finalised. At the time of writing this report I am uncertain how some of the interests/concerns of the RDA will be included. Robert Simper and I (who attend the DE Plan meetings) hope to resolve these points before it goes to print.

Finally, I note that Annie Leech has decided to retire from the Committee. I would like to thank her for all the clear thinking she brought to the Committee and the work she put in to administer the RDA web site. She will be sorely missed. And on the subject of the Committee I would like to give notice that Wendy Brown has decided to stand down from being Secretary at the AGM and that we would welcome a volunteer to take on this task.

I look forward to seeing you at our Autumn Meeting on Thursday 30th October in the Woodbridge Community Hall starting at 7.30pm at which our Guest Speaker, Andrew Hawes, will be giving a presentation on 'Defence of the River Walls on the Deben'.

Robin Whittle





James Palmer's completed Dragonfly - 'Phoenix'

Anne Moore

## Will Green's First Committee Meeting.

It was 15th May, 2014: Will Green's first RDA committee meeting.

19.30hrs at the Woodbridge Cruising Club.

Well, there we were, seated round the table in the Bar like "Twelve Good Men" . . . and the meeting began.

For readers who are not familiar with the innards of the Woodbridge Cruising Club facilities, its toilets are either, to the observant, a disabled person's room off the entrance lobby or, if you follow the signs, down several flights of steep stairs into the guts of the building.

As the meeting of **that** evening progressed, it was not noticed that a chair had been vacated, until a deafening, high pitched alarm, pierced through the entire structure of the

building.

Hitherto unobserved hearing aids started to appear on the table, like winkles out of shells, followed quickly by the startled figure of Robert Simper re-entering through the doorway that had led to the basement.

Chairs, inaudibly slid back from the table as mime-like figures rose in urgent mode to seek to allay the intruding noise.

From a trio peering at a label on a wall mounted metal box in the far corner of the big room, Peter Thubron turned, waving his spectacles and asking "*has anyone got a mobile phone?*" "*I could call my wife*".

By which time, David Bucknell in the middle of the room, was reaching up from a precariously wobbly stool in an effort to dismantle the offending fitment.

There were others, coming and going through the numerous doors surrounding the room . . . West End Farce had nothing on this . . .

and so, feeling spare, I picked up the kettle from a nearby table and made for the kitchen: it was time we had another cup of tea . . .

but, as my fingertips pushed the socket switch down the alarm startlingly ceased.

With no sign of Police or Fire Brigade, we returned to the table and as reclaimed hearing aids were replaced in somewhat redder ears, our

Chairman drew the meeting to a close.

Ironically, it seems, we should have engaged the help of the youngest member, Will, to read the wall-plate, but I think he was still wondering whether this had all been an item on the Agenda that he'd somehow missed. It seemed that deficient lighting in the well of the said stairs had led to Robert, in his fumbling for a switch, to set the alarm off.

And I, before leaving, made for the loo in the entrance lobby, the existence of which was news to the rest of the gathering.

Anne Moore

## News From the Hards

### Woodbridge

Starting my walk at Kyson Point I noticed that the 'fenced area', remembered as a place of childhood family picnics, had at least encouraged the regeneration of the protective grasses.

Passing the Deben Yacht Club I thought about the changes over the years and by this time next year, there will, be new changing room facilities if the application for a lottery grant of £50K is successful.

After many failed attempts over the years, the draining to reduce the water-level in the area by the model boat pond, has led to the confident refurbishment of the Tea Hut which is now an excellent place to meet friends for a snack or light meal. There is now a planning application (C14/2689) to re-site the Tea Hut behind the band stand where it would be more visible and have a greater area for tables. If it is fenced in, however, people will not

be able to use the area as they have done for picnicking and for children to play.

Incredibly, the former Everson's shed has not changed visually, at least not at the time of writing; but, having seen photographs of its foot-plate areas, it seems to be defying the laws of physics! Up for sale now with planning permission for a complete rebuild that will include the euphemism for riverside residences: flats for apprentices and holiday lets.

Passing Whisstocks I wondered how John Krejsa was getting on restoring 'Mist'. He was the last one in Whisstocks when George Whisstock had thrown him the keys saying *"I'm going; here take these, you may need them."*

Planning approval has now been granted to begin rebuilding the derelict site. What were originally to be holiday-lets, the developer has managed to have "varied" to residential flats on the top story of the four story building that will have retail premises and offices below, alongside the Boat Building shed. The argument being, that in order to meet unforeseen additional costs, such as replacing the present floodgates with some that would be quicker to set in place in the event of a flood threat than those already there, they needed to avoid the VAT sum imposed on holiday lets.





Following the approval of the Variation Order on Whisstocks, it was stated by SCDC Planning that this should not set a precedent for future proposals on the riverside. However, we already have, plans to rebuild Robertsons Boatyard (DC/14/2126), that include proposed residential accommodation in the new office building. I believe these should be opposed, although I recognise that many of the facilities on the site are unfit for a viable modern boat-building and repair yard, so do support the general principle, to redevelop the site.

On Lime Kiln Quay, the Flemish-gabled building that was the Coal Yard Barn before being granted planning consent for a rebuild conversion to work/business and residential combined, is now I see, predictably, on the market as a house. The nearby former Classic Boat chandlery, granted planning permission on a similar basis is near completion, so watch there too.

Continuing upriver, before leaving, we pass three awful galvanised tubing structures which I can only think must have been erected by the 'cash-strapped' Environment Agency



fearing liability claims from members of the public, who might be injured by something that has been there, as part of the flood wall, for thirty years.

Anne Moore

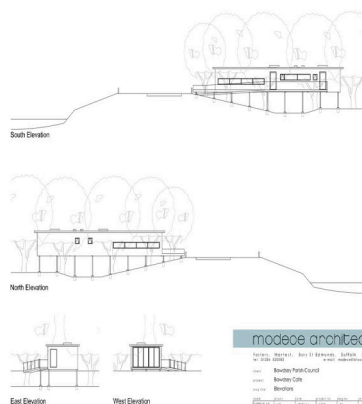
## Waldringfield

The flood wall is being constructed and John Wilkins hopes it will be completed by early December. (See also page 19)

## Bawdsey Quay

Planning Approval, subject to a number of conditions, has been given for a Café and visitor Centre in the Amenity Car Park. It is to be funded primarily from grants rather than from Parish Council funds so it will be interesting to see how this develops.

Repairs have been completed to Foot-



path FP5 (SW of Bawsey Manor) and it is hoped it can be re-opened when the Tamarisk on the path has been cleared. As yet the steps, which were eroded at the northern end of the path, have not been replaced.

## Felixstowe Ferry

Construction of the new 'pilot house' is at an advanced stage. It certainly will be one of the most 'significant' buildings at the Ferry.

Alison Theresa is now for sale as a houseboat.

David Bucknell

(A full version of Anne Moore's walk will be in the Spring edition.)

### **The Journey Towards an Estuary Plan**

Speaking recently of the work of Councillor Anni Healey, I was reminded of how long it is since she helped to start the River Deben Association; knowing her quite well I'm sure she would be pleased that the organisation has flourished. In comparison the Deben Estuary Partnership is relatively new but, even so it is nearly six years since the then RDA Chairman, Ed Stanford gave us good advice about the Deben and what might be achieved by involving landowners and local communities in the future of the Estuary. The RDA became a key player in the formation of the DEP and today RDA members, including the Chairman, sit on the Steering Group and others are involved in the working groups, for example Adrian Judge chairs the Access Group.

Since the DEP began we have facilitated minor wall repairs which were not high on the Environment Agency's maintenance list and built on the work, first demonstrated by the RDA, of moving away from the creation of new saltmarsh to restoring and regenerating our present, declining saltmarsh. But the biggest challenge has, undoubtedly, been the Estuary Plan, which has proved to be both a worthwhile opportunity and a significant responsibility.

In the past it was the role of the EA to produce an Estuarine Strategy setting out the management of a tidal estuary – but only in terms of flood risk management. Towards the end of 2011 the EA put

this approach aside and offered to work in partnership with ourselves and the AONB Unit to produce a plan which could include the wider, interlocking issues of ecology, landscape, recreation and the local economy – all of which play a major part in our appreciation of the estuary and will influence what the estuary might become in the future.

At the very beginning of the Plan process RDA members contributed an important steer. Their feedback from a membership wide survey, later endorsed by local communities, established the basic premise which underlies the Plan: that people value the special qualities of the estuary and want to see its unique character conserved.

Over subsequent months the recurring themes which emerged from consultation have taken centre stage in the policy work undertaken by the DEP sub groups and RDA members. Always at the top of the list is the wish to maintain and improve flood defences – protecting homes, businesses and agricultural land.

So the principle section on Flood Risk Management will come first and set out the strategic importance of the Knolls and the integrity of defences in the lower estuary. The flood cells where the value of assets protected offers the likelihood of some government funding are listed but the Plan also recognises the intention to sustain the defence of other areas for as long as possible.

The Plan will go on to look at the varied elements of landscape and the pressures those will come under – the importance of wildlife and the

challenge of balancing conservation with opportunities for recreation and how mitigation can offset disturbance. It will recognise the importance of saltmarsh – both for its environmental importance and as an element of flood defence. The principle areas of the local economy are considered and solutions to the twin issues of excess surface water and prolonged drought are put forward. Access and estuary-based recreation provide enjoyment and benefit the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors alike. So the Plan looks at how a balance can be achieved between recreation and conservation of a distinctive landscape and sensitive environment. Lastly, it recognises the government requirement for communities to develop emergency resilience in the case of flooding

This different approach to estuary planning breaks new ground in offering local people more opportunity to influence policy and the actions that will arise from the Management Plan. Developing the new way of working has been a steep learning curve for all involved - challenging and often time consuming. The Plan will be ready for wider consultation in mid November, then, once any amendments are made and it has been endorsed by both the District and County Councils, the final document becoming a Supplementary Planning Document – aligned to policy set out in the Local Plan and therefore able to influence future decisions regarding the river.

Christine Block

Robert Simper

## THE 2013 FLOODS

The history of the East Coast of England is punctuated with gales and flood tides. Both have occurred fairly regularly over the decades. We must have had a high tide sometime in the mid-1970s that threw debris on to the top of the river wall in front of my cottage. Since I could remember the 1953 Floods, and the devastating effect they had on the whole area, I knew what this meant. On the next abnormal high tide my home would be flooded.

It took several years of campaigning, but in the autumn of 1978 the Anglia Water Authority said that if I could find the clay they would heighten the river wall. Without any fuss and bother the engineers got on with the work and heightened and widened the Shottisham Creek wall.

In December 2013 the Environment Agency gave two excellent days warning that a very high tide was coming. We moved our cattle to high ground and sandbagged the cottage. We have, over the decades, had flood warnings on a regular basis so that we didn't panic. The police and our family had tried to get us to leave home, but we stayed.

However, at half tide I went down on to the river wall and to my horror found that the tide was already higher than a normal spring tide. I knew the 1953 Flood was going to happen again. I felt really bad, standing alone in the darkness in the roar of the gale and slapping of waves against the wall. I expected our home to be flooded and knew that at this stage there was absolutely nothing we could do, but wait. We sat in the living room and watched television and drank coffee.

At about 1.30am December 6 the waves were almost up to the top of the wall. What really upset me was that in the darkness I couldn't see to take photographs of the Deben in full flood. I realised afterwards that the 1906 and 1953 Floods had all taken place at night so that no one has seen the Deben topped up to the brim. Then came the great moment when the water started to recede. We, and the houses at lower end of Shottisham, had got away with this one. We had waited thirty-five years before the wall heightening was justified, but it was good value when it happened.

### **Some effects of the abnormal High Tide on Dec 6 2013.**

#### **Bawdsey**

The tide rose over Bawdsey Quay

and the three cottages had water up to their lower rooms. The tide went over the Bawdsey Manor entrance and flooded the grass lawns in front of Bawdsey Manor.

The river wall from Bawdsey Quay to Ramsholt Dock, some three miles long, was over topped in places, but with no serious flooding.



#### **Ramsholt**

The tide broke through a wall, that had been built after 1953 and was not high enough, and flooded the Dock Marshes below Ramsholt church. Ramsholt Lodge marshes wall was also over topped and the grazing marshes flooded.

#### **Sutton**

The river wall was over topped and the Pettistree Hall marshes flooded. At the Ham stream, between the Tips, the tide appears to have gone up the sluice and flooded a small wild life pond.

The Quay Cottage beside Methersgate Quay had just been modernised and was flooded. The river walls here were not repaired after



Hill Farm

the 1953 Floods.

The wall below Sutton Hoo Farm was over topped on the part that had not been heightened.

## Woodbridge

Woodbridge Tide Mill was flooded. The Granary Cottage was flooded even though there were boards in front of the doors as water went up the toilets. The ground floor of the Granary was also flooded, closing the café and causing considerable distress to residents.

The Flood Barrier at the top of Whisstock's slipway leaked badly under pressure and flooded the yard. Also the water came up the rainwater drainage pipes and went under the railway line through rain

drainage pipes to flood the gardens of the old Ferry Inn.

The properties on Ferry Quay were also flooded, but only up to the floor of the caravan café.

The tide went up the rain drainage pipes to flood part of Woodbridge Boatyard.

## Martlesham

The wall broke on the north side of Martlesham Creek.

There was a major break on grazing marshes at Hill Farm, Martlesham. That damaged the farm land and closed the footpath. The wall had been repaired and heightened in 2011 but because of the whirl snails some of the wall had been left low and the tide broke through there.

## Waldringfield

The River Deben's most costly disaster was around Waldringfield Quay and the adjoining grazing marshes. The water came up the road in front of the 'Maybush' to flood the boatyard and seventeen properties. Some of the houses were flooded to a depth of over 4ft. At the same time the tide overtopped the adjoining Waller Dairy Farm marshes and went up into Rosa Waller's garden.

## Kirton

Tide over topped the wall at the top



of Kirton Creek putting salt water into an irrigation reservoir.

### **Felixstowe Ferry**

The tide flooded all the buildings outside the wall built after the 1953 Flood. Including the Cafes, yacht club and boatyard.

### **Summary**

The Flood Tide does not appear to have made any difference to wild life. Birds simply flew inland and returned as the water subsided. The fierce ebb tide damaged the face of some of the saltings along the Deben, in some places quite badly. The effect of the ebb tide was most noticeable on the shingle knolls at the river mouth where some of the outer knolls were flattened, but these have reformed in the summer.

The height of the flood tide at Ramsholt seems to have been much the same as the Floods of 1953, but at Woodbridge the three flood marks on walls, although they seem to be variable, suggest that the tide here was higher than in 1953.

The repairs to the river walls after the Floods of 1953 saved the River Deben area from a major disaster and there was no loss of life nor was it a huge financial disaster. Floods are terrifying because once the river

defences break, there is no way of stopping the force of the water. We can't stop very high tides, they have always occurred, but with good defences you can stop most flooding.

Robert Simper

## **Simon Read**

### **Jacoba and the Tidal Surge**

The evening of the tidal surge I was due to travel back to Woodbridge from London on the train. My partner, Ros, had already warned me at work to expect an extra high tide early the next morning, so forewarned we agreed to lift up everything that was likely to float off or get damaged such as bicycle, firewood, pot plants and coal and I gave it little more thought other than assuming that, as frequently happens, it would probably come to nothing.

However, arriving at Liverpool Street Station to catch the 9.00 pm train, it was clear that all was not quite right: because of the gale of that day everything was delayed and so it was very likely that rather than arriving in good time to deal with snags, I could expect the tide to be well advanced when I eventually got into Woodbridge. The very late train stopped and started all of the way out to Ipswich, punctuated by bulletins from Ros that increased in levels of urgency along with the rising level of water across Robertsons Boatyard. So far as we were concerned, the only real bother was to ensure that there was enough scope on the mooring lines to indefinitely slacken them off, otherwise,

apart from keeping an eye out for everyone else on the moorings, there was little more that we could do.

Arriving about an hour late in Ipswich at 11.30, the last train on the Lowestoft line would have long since departed, if indeed it had departed at all since the line at Lowestoft Station was by then well under water; so it was a cab to Woodbridge, arriving around midnight to witness the Environment Agency struggling to close the gates to Bass Dock ahead of the rising tide.

Rushing along the road along to Robertsons, it was with some relief that I could see the main shed all lit up, which meant that there would be a bit of support if needs be. Although there was some water covering the lane around to the yard, this was no more than ankle deep. But over the wall, I could see that the level of the river: with still more tide yet to run, was lapping close to the concrete capping of the sheet piling. At the yard everyone was busy sandbagging the floodgates, shoring up boats that threatened to float away mooring dinghies to anything that would not budge and rescuing blocks and gear that had started to float away. The water across the yard was by then at least 1metre deep and was expected to continue rising until around 2.00 am.

Tom, the yard lad, obligingly rowed me over the yard between the hulls of the shored up boats to where Ros was keeping an eye on things on the barge, spearing anything with a boathook that threatened to escape. I climbed aboard and we settled down for the long wait, slackening the lines until the top of

tide. The electricity supply had long since submerged, fizzed and failed, but other than retrieving useful timber as it floated by, there was little else to be done.

Around 2.00 am it was over 1.5metres across the yard, thankfully the wind had dropped and there was no rain. According to one of our neighbours from the cottages in the lane, the water level reached within a handspan of the top of the concrete capping of the floodwall before the tide stalled and receded; but just as we started to relax, within half an hour, it was rising again as the surge came through.

This time it rose higher than before but not for long: almost immediately the ebb started in earnest and within an hour, we were hauling back the slack on our lines and rescuing odd bits of property before it escaped out into the tideway. Just as the previous surge tide of November 2012, it was not as catastrophic as it would have been if the surge and high water had exactly synchronized; if it had in this instance, it would have quite likely overtopped the Woodbridge Flood Defences.

It was bad enough on other parts of the river and a salutary lesson in the power of a flood tide: overtopping the wall directly below Sutton Hoo, breaching the wall at the top of Martlesham Creek and at High Farm on the downstream corner where Martlesham Creek meets the river and overtopping at Waldringfield and at Kirton Creek. But up at Woodbridge, the boatyard got away relatively lightly, with most serious damage to the electrical system including the need to replace

the motor for the main winch and the inconvenience of renewing all of the electrical junction boxes supplying the moorings.

This was easily the highest tide that we have experienced in the 35 years that we have been on the river and it left its mark higher than the 1953 floods. So this is testimony to the effectiveness of defences that have not been seriously tested since they were raised by 1.5metres about twenty years ago. Without this and a much more enhanced sense of community preparedness, it would have been a different story altogether. I wonder if this has given pause for thought on the matter of either resilience or building in a flood risk zone? I very much doubt it.

Simon Read

**Karen Thomas -  
Environment Agency**

## **The Deben Estuary – After the Surge**

### **Background**

Over the past decades the Environment Agency has managed the flood defences in the Deben estuary. A combination of low earth embankments, protecting predominantly rural land, and predicted sea level rise means that ongoing Government investment at many locations is no longer possible. Funds need to be targeted at protecting the most people and property from flood risk and the tidal surge of December 2013 highlighted how vulnerable our coastal communities are to flooding and these are the areas where ongoing government investment is being focussed.

However, we recognise the importance of agriculture to the local economy and landscape of the area and understand how important flood defences are for access and wildlife.

Following work in other estuaries we decided to take a different approach to discussing a plan for managing flood risk in the Deben and in partnership with the Suffolk Coast and heaths AONB Unit we are working with the Deben Estuary Partnership (DEP) to support a community-led estuary management plan approach. Through the Deben estuary plan we have been able to investigate flood risk issues for the short and long term alongside the wider concerns of local people who live, work and enjoy spending time around the river.

Since 2009 we have been working alongside the DEP to take forward a new style of working with coastal communities. Using valuable lessons learnt in past years also helped our approach to coastal management, involving local communities in discussions and decisions from the very beginning. Putting the community at the centre of decision making, forming local partnerships and seeking external investment contributions provides the best opportunity for mitigating future flood and coastal erosion risk.

Ahead of the tidal surge in December 2013 our involvement in the Estuary Plan afforded us opportunities to speak directly with parishes, community groups, landowners, local businesses, interest groups and local residents. Key elements of our approach meant that when the surge began and during the

weeks and months that followed we were able to have direct contact with those worst affected, through both the DEP, and directly with flooded residents, landowners and businesses.

## **The Tidal Surge**

On the night of December 5th-6th 2013 the East Coast experienced the worst tidal surge since 1953. The surge peaked around the Boston area in Lincolnshire at a 1 in 1000 event (0.1% chance of occurrence annually). As it tracked southwards the severity reduced as weather conditions and pressure systems improved. At Lowestoft we registered 3.29m AODN \* which is a 1 in 200 event (0.5% Chance of occurrence annually). This compares with the 1953 surge which was (3.35m). By the time the surge reached Harwich the surge itself was no longer in synch with the high tide and the winds had turned westerly which meant the surge dropped significantly to 1 in 30 event. The Harwich gauge registered 3.45m AODN which is significantly less than in 1953 when the tide reached 4.02m.

In terms of our estuaries it is difficult to say exactly what 'flood return' period we had but clearly the surge moved up through each estuary causing breaches and overtopping and flooding key communities, as well as hundreds of acres of farmland and important habitats. On the Deben, almost all flood walls were overtopped, however there were only a few breaches in the Martlesham Creek area. Walls have been built up since 1953 so whilst most stood up to the tide, as the surge moved up the Deben it would have been funnelled towards the head of

the estuary. The 1953 level at the Tide Mill in Woodbridge was exceeded and Quayside businesses flooded. There was significant damage within the Martlesham Creek Area where walls breached on the north and south banks and Martlesham Sluice was damaged. At the mouth of the estuary Bawdsey Quay and Felixstowe Ferry properties and businesses were flooded. In Waldringfield 18 homes and businesses were under a metre of water.

## **The Environment Agency's role during and after the flood**

Flood warnings went out well in advance of the flood and the media reported updates asking people to be prepared ahead of the potential for flooding. As soon as the surge passed we moved from warning people mode to supporting recovery. We appointed Flood Ambassadors to cover the affected communities across Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex. I undertook the Suffolk Flood Ambassador role which was to work closely with people in the community, to listen, reassure and act as a conduit for information to partners, our own teams and help inform our next steps. I am still working with people whose lives and communities were left in disarray, many of whom are keen to plan their 'resilience' to manage future flooding emergencies.

The benefit of having built up relations across the estuaries through groups like the Deben estuary partnership was immense. Within a day or so of the flood I had reports from the DEP stating which walls had been breached or overtopped. They had contacted the parishes and landowner network and got information

quickly about the severity of flooding around the estuary. This allowed us to prioritise what support people needed and to what extent we could help.

Nationally, our first priority was to focus on people and property that had been flooded. We visited Waldringfield and Felixstowe Ferry in particular to talk to those who had flooded. At Martlesham sluice we undertook immediate repairs to reduce flood risk upstream. We worked with professional partners to ensure that messages coming from the communities about their needs were shared. We also had agreement with Natural England that landowners with damaged defences could quickly repair walls with available clay and we saw fantastic landowner networks where clay was shared around the estuaries to help the recovery. Our Community Resilience Advisor Carol Mayston was quick to work with flooded communities to see what emergency plans they had in place and how effectively they had been employed so we could support communities after the floods to build on the experience and learn lessons for future flood events.

### **Lessons Learned**

The 2013 tidal surge was a very significant flood and although many communities and businesses were affected the benefits of partnership working speeded up the recovery from the impacts of the flood.

Most of our rural defences stood up to the tidal surge very well. Most breaches around the estuaries occurred where there was little or no saltmarsh in front of the walls, highlighting the importance of local initiatives to reinstate marshes.

In the Deben repairs to defences have been split between private landowners and the Environment Agency. We have funded repair works at Martlesham sluice, Kirton and Felixstowe Ferry where people and property are at risk in the floodplain.

The DEP acted as a telephone exchange getting information to the EA and other professional partners and allowing us to get messages back those most affected by flooding in the Deben in the days, weeks and months after the flood.

Landowners were a fantastic resource. The work we had done engaging landowners in private wall repairs meant that many were well-prepared to undertake works immediately after the floods to reinstate their damaged walls. Because the landowner work had involved Natural England through the DEP, we were able to agree a period for emergency works with landowners. Several landowners had already undertaken works on their walls so we could simply verbally agree they got on with similar repairs following the flood.

The work we had done in engaging communities about Emergency Planning with Suffolk County Council meant many parishes had plans to deal with floods and were better able to prepare for the surge and subsequently recover from it. There is an appetite within the parishes to revisit their Emergency plans and improve them with lessons that were learnt.

There is a lag in the time we state high tide on the coast and when the surge will reach communities up the estuaries. For the Deben we tailor our warnings



based on the Lowestoft gauge and the surge will take time to travel from there and up the Deben. We are changing our Flood Warning Direct messages to include a 2-3 hour time slot after we expect high water at the Lowestoft gauge so that people stay vigilant long enough for the surge to have passed. This is very important when there is a surge at night and people may go to bed thinking the worst has passed.

Possibly the most positive outcome of the flood is at Waldringfield. Through the DEP Plan process we had discussed the potential for a flood defence improvement scheme for the community. These discussions meant that the community had already got an agreed project that people locally found acceptable. We would have progressed this project on completion of the Estuary Plan in 2015. Following the flood the residents and businesses on the waterfront galvanised to form the Waldringfield Flood Defence Group. They bid for and successfully won Coastal Community Funds. They are working with the Environment Agency and Suffolk Coastal District Council with the funds we have available for repairing damaged defences and properties to improve the level of flood defence they have in the village. This coupled with revising their Emergency Plan will ensure they are more resilient to flooding in the future. The scheme will be complete by November 2014 and demonstrates how the power of communities and partnerships can achieve so much more.

For me the flood has highlighted how with good partnerships, engagement and planning we can make our

resources go so much further. In rural locations like the Deben managing flood risk will be challenging. However, the relationships, funding ideas and partnership frameworks that are now in place are a fantastic foundation for managing flood risk and being resilient to flooding in the future.

Karen Thomas

## Have you seen this man?



This is Richard Steward, seen here with Brian Johnson of Bawdsey Parish Council.

Since sailing round Britain single handed, Richard has occupied himself with questioning some of the assumptions being made about coastal flooding, sea level rise and drawing his own conclusions. Richard's career was in electronic engineering but he has been involved in discussions about the Blyth Estuary and the future height of river walls.

He is seen here with his GPS 'measuring stick' and since the surge he has been measuring the height of the floodwater.

Here are some of his conclusions:

Bawdsey - 6 Ferry Road 3.40m OD.  
Shottisham Sluice 3.4 OD (+/- 0.1m)  
Woodbridge Marina (Main Gate) 3.37m OD.

The wall at Woodbridge is 4.0 OD.

David Bucknell

*\* AODN - Above Ordinance Datum Newlyn*

## **Repair work to the river walls of the Deben following the tidal surge of December 2013**

During the storm surge of the night of 5/6 December 2013 there were several places where the river walls of the River Deben were overtopped but there were only two major breaches. The worst of



Breach at Martlesham

these occurred just downstream of the entrance to Martlesham Creek and flooded sixty acres of pasture land. The other was on the north side of Martlesham Creek just downstream of the Boatyard. There were several places where the walls were overtopped and the worst effect of this was at Waldringfield where it flooded several buildings.

This note describes recent work that has been carried out to repair/maintain the walls where they are most vulnerable.

### **West bank, just downstream of Martlesham Creek**

The main breach in the river wall occurred just downstream of Martlesham Creek. The length of the breach was about seventy metres and the power of the water caused half ton lumps of clay to be flung two hundred metres from the breach. It is thought that one consequence of this breach in the wall, and rush of water into the pastureland, was a reduction in the surge level upstream in Martlesham Creek and Woodbridge, by about half a metre. It is quite conceivable that without this drop in the surge level, the water level at the Martlesham end of the creek would have reached the Red Lion pub and flooded the houses in that area.

During the past four years the landowner had realised that the wall was vulnerable and had sought to improve the outlet for the sluice into Martlesham Creek. This had eventually been carried out through a joint agreement with the Environment Agency. At the same time the river wall was repaired except for one area which Natural England insisted be left to preserve the habitat of a particular type of rare snail. Unfortunately this is where the breach in the wall started. The flow of water through the breach caused a deep hole (three to four metres) to form at the line of the wall. Even after the surge level had subsided water flowed in and out through the breach freely with each tide, for the next three months. As a result the grass in the pastureland was destroyed and it became covered with a centimetre of silt. Interestingly,

three months after the pasture has been drained the grass is beginning to reappear.



Repair downstream of Martlesham

Four options were considered for the repair work of this breach. The one chosen included constructing a sill along the seventy metre length of the breach. This has been built up to a level of 3.3m above ordnance datum (AOD), which allows overtopping at exceptional high tides and flooding of the pastureland. The sluice leading from the pastureland into Martlesham Creek will drain the land as soon as the tide falls and thus major damage to the pastureland will be avoided. The scheme also has the advantage that when another major surge occurs the effect of the water rushing into this pastureland will mitigate the effect of the surge upstream.

The work to restore the river wall at the breach involved realignment inland around the hole at the breach. Temporary sheet piling was used to block the flow of water and then locally excavated clay was placed either

side of the piling until it reached the specified level for the sill (3.3m AOD). The sheet piling was then removed.

The river side and top of the wall were covered with a layer of top soil along the sill. This was reinforced with a GeoTex surface covering (a plastic mesh). This prevents clay loss while the plants and seeds mature. The final sill is formed of the local clay with topsoil and grass to protect the wall during short periods of overtopping. The grass also ensures that the clay does not dry out and crack.

In addition to the repair of the existing river wall a further wall has been built inland to protect the arable land and a bore hole which provides essential fresh water to a man made reservoir. This wall will provide a vital protection at times of major surges.

The cost of all the recent work is in the order of £100K.

### **East bank just upstream of Ramsholt**

The landowner of the pasture land inside the wall decided to strengthen and raise the wall. This work was carried out under





the direction of Andrew Hawes, a local Geotechnical Consultant. The length of wall maintenance was 400m long. The existing wall with a public footpath on top was kept open to the public and the new work was carried out on the land



Ramsholt

side. This involved increasing the width of wall and raising the level to 3.8m AOD (Above Ordnance Datum). This is expected to settle to about 3.7m AOD. This has left the public footpath at a lower level (about 0.5m) on the river side. The slope of the back face of the wall has been flattened to an angle of about 25° (1:2 slope). All the material for the wall has been excavated from the existing adjacent marsh/field, being assessed suitable by Mr Hawes. The dyke thus created was excavated not closer than 12m from the foot of the wall. The whole of the new wall has been seeded with suitable grass (Seacoat). The Environment Agency recommends the use of a standard 'bank' mix. This grass is considered important for the protection of the wall both in ensuring that a) the clay in the

wall does not dry out causing cracks, and b) the wall can survive an overtop of about 300mm. The cost of this work was in the order of £180/m.

### **East bank opposite Robertson's Boatyard in Woodbridge**

The river wall at Sutton protects ten hectares of land with three properties. There is also a fresh water extraction point for irrigation water used on an adjacent six hundred acre farm. The three property owners formed a loose consortium in 2006, called the Sutton Hoo Marsh Owners (SHMO) and decided to take responsibility for the river wall defence. Flood Defence consent was given by the EA in September 2008 for this work which was carried out in 2009. Following the 2013 surge the current landowner has specified and carried out further work to protect the land and three houses at low level.

The work was divided into three sections, totalling a length of 1,500m, for which he received consent from



Work to the West Bank

the Environment Agency. This consent gave permission to upgrade those parts of the walls which were low lying. This included strengthening the wall and building up the land side batter to a 2.5:1 slope. The material for strengthening the walls was brought in as the existing material in the low lying fields was not considered suitable for the wall. The wall will be covered with grass. Essex stone slabs had been used in the past to protect the bottom of the river face from wave action in time of high tides. In some places erosion has taken place behind the slabs. In such situations the slabs have been crushed

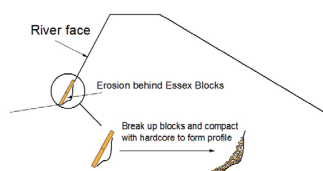


Figure 1: Erosion behind Essex Blocks

and mixed with hardcore to form an armoured profile (See Figure 1). This will allow *Spartina* grass to grow quickly and create a natural barrier.

### **A design standard for river wall maintenance:**

As a result of the work carried out by the Sutton Hoo Marsh Owners in 2009 the process of the EA's Flood Defence consent form (FD1) was improved making it simpler and more straightforward. It now allows a single point of communication. All the necessary searches and checks are carried out from there. Apart from checks by the EA the particular requirements of Natural England, Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Coastal

District Council, Suffolk Coast and Heaths, Suffolk Wildlife, the local Parish Council and other relevant authorities are considered. The basis of consent has been to allow the low points of the wall to be brought up to the height of the surrounding defences.

It is significant that the specification for the work at each of the places under recent repair/maintenance has been different. Andrew Hawes and others have recently proposed that the following should be the basis of a 'design standard' for future work on river walls (say, for the next ten years). A one in fifty year event is a practical basis for such work. This assumes a 4m AOD surge for the River Deben. The Environment Agency data base and model have been shown to be reasonably accurate and should be used to check the existing height of the walls.

The design standard should include the following prime points:

- the wall should be able to survive 300mm overtopping without breaching ('Resilience Concept' of the Environment Agency)
- the angle of the back slope (batter) should not be steeper than 1:2
- the target level for all walls should be 3.8m above Ordnance Datum. This allows for some settlement (say 0.1m) of any new material placed on the wall.

At some parts of the wall it may be difficult to meet this criteria and some geotechnical advice may be necessary.

A wall access track should be considered when planning repair work. Ideally the existing drainage ditch should be moved to about 12m from the landward wall



toe. The waste soil can be used to fill in the old ditch and build up a 6m to 10m wide berm (creating the access track) to the same height of the seaward saltings (usually MHWS). The clay excavate from the new soak dyke can be used to raise the wall and reduce the wall batter to 1:2 (25°) minimum.

I am grateful to Andrew Hawes, Bill Waring and John Symes for providing me with the information and photographs on which this article is based.

Robin Whittle

## **Bentwaters Revisited**

*The application to increase flying at Bentwaters has aroused considerable debate on the RDA Committee. Here our former Chariman reminds us of why Bentwaters is such a 'hot' issue for many members of the RDA. I hope to include a piece on the RDA website outlining the current arguments. (Ed.)*

## **Denzil Cowdry**

### **How the Deben was saved !**

Saving the Deben from noise pollution of airliners from Bentwaters was one significant issue during my tenure as Chairman. The middle-aged lady who came to Melton as the Planning Inspector became used to my week-long attendance at her evidence meetings. I was always early enough to sit right in front of her so that our eyes often met. A squirm gave my view on the evidence given, not always the truth as I saw it.

The real problem was two fold. International airliners taking off from the proposed major airport at Bentwaters would fly to turn over Woodbridge and then pass down the Deben to proceed overseas. At the other end of their stay, on landing, the aircraft approach path went low over Snape Maltings. The then Director observed that this would destroy the growing business, difficult enough where half the audience were fish!

How the clans rallied! The Alde and Ore Association wanted financial help to employ solicitors and we voted them £1000, nearly half our capital. This was returned unused. Dear old Frank Knights found £500, left in an old bank account ever since the French tried to come here with their oysters, after the war. We were not without resources and of course we won the day.

The RDA has always been quite a mute body, occasionally stirred by a major issue. A rather selfish view of some of the original instigators was that the river should be kept 'quiet' deterring too many visitors! I was never in entire agreement with this view and happily we are now more welcoming to all, except Jet Skis.

Thank goodness we kept airliners away!

Denzil Cowdry



I was brought up at Sluice Farm, which stands above Kirton Creek and had a magical childhood there in the 50s and 60s. It was always a race to see how early in the year we could have our first swim in the Creek which lay just over the fields from the farmhouse. My brother and I would gather up our swimsuits and towels and, with the dogs at our heels, run the gauntlet of the cows grazing and barbed wire fences. Or if we were lucky, we would all pile in my father's old Land Rover - no seatbelts - hanging on tight as we bumped along the track in the open truck with dust blowing in our faces.

In those days Kirton Creek was a popular bathing spot at high tide. Families used to walk the mile from Kirton bringing a picnic. One villager told me that she used to pack the pram up and take her children and spend nearly all the holidays there. The local primary school children even came from Trimley St Martin School for swimming lessons. There was a beach of sorts and a diving board made out of some rusty iron piping and planks. We had no concern about the muddy coloured water or the mud between our toes. It was just like having our own swimming pool.

As we became more confident swim-

mers, our great delight was to swim out to 'the barge'. This was the remains of the 'Three Sisters', a Thames sailing barge built in Maldon in 1865 and owned by George Fulcher of Ipswich. She had carried agricultural products around the Suffolk Coast and delivered Ipswich waste to the farms. She was scuttled in the Creek in 1922 when this form of transport became uneconomic. You can still see her remains today, but much reduced from the days when we used to clamber aboard and command our very own pirate ship!



*Trimley St Martin school children swimming at the creek*

We always knew the times of the tides so that we could get a swim whenever possible. However, a low tide did not stop us. We developed a taste for 'mud skating'. I remember one children's party when we all took off to the Creek to introduce our friends from Ipswich to the sport and had to give them

a hasty bath back at the farmhouse before their parents arrived to collect them.

I gained much of my education from the area, collecting and pressing wild flowers, making a study for school projects of the saltings and of the local crag pit. I combed the fields nearby for ancient artifacts and fossils but usually only found bits of old china.



Our knowledge of the Deben only went as far as the mouth of the Creek, the river itself was for the most part a world outside our experience. None of the local people sailed a boat and the arrival of visiting boats from the river was a rare event, probably because the channel was so narrow and winding. My father, Ken Bailey was Farm Manager for Mr Geoffrey Paul, whose descendants still own the large estate at Kirton. The Paul family had a speed-boat which they used for water-skiing or picnics at the Rocks. This was a rare opportunity to go beyond the Creek.

Summer or winter we loved nothing more than to take the dogs and walk down to the Creek and along the river wall, watching the boats and birds or crossing the saltings to find samphire

and sea lavender while trying to avoid the treacherous salt pans. In the hard winter of 1963, my father and I even walked across the Creek which was entirely iced over.

I remember reading George Arnott's book Suffolk Estuary. The Story of the River Deben as a teenager and my imagination being fired by his description of the area in the past - *"In the lanes near the old farmhouse at the head of the Creek (the now demolished Sluice Cottages) you get the sense of lost activity and deserted streets and it is almost possible to trace the ancient quays along the grassy slopes of the valley"*.

Kirton Creek has been peopled since pre-history. A recent archaeological exploration to the south of the Creek showed

evidence of Bronze Age occupation of the area. We know that there was a settlement there called Guston, the name being a modern version of the Anglo Saxon name "Guthestuna" which is mentioned in Domesday in 1086. It lay at the end of a series of havens along the west bank of the river Deben which were together known as Goseford, a significant trading port up until the 15th century. Originally the Mill River which feeds into the Creek was much deeper; flowing from Brightwell, through Newbourne into what would have been a wide estuary.

It is believed that a ferry went from Kirton Creek or Guston Stone (as a hard was called in those days) to Ramsholt. The Sluice Cottages, originally a 16th century farmhouse

standing at the head of the Creek was possibly the Ferry House. It was demolished in the 1960s and I can just remember it. Every room had wooden beams and brick floors. There was talk of there being tunnels underneath the



building to the river used by smugglers.

There is a tragic story of the Stollery family who lived in the farmhouse in 1894. Eleven family members and friends took a holiday outing in their boat from Kirton Creek to the Ferry Boat Inn, they set off 'full of health and high spirits' but on their return journey the boat capsized and six drowned.

Gradually the port decayed and the river silted up until it was walled up



Detail from Hodgkinson's Survey of Suffolk 1783

in the 17th century and a sluice gate installed. A dock was built at the head of the Creek in 1880 to serve nearby brickworks and was used by farmers until 1933. The marshland around the Creek was drained for arable use in the latter half of the twentieth when it was purchased by the Paul family.

World War Two came to this backwater when in 1943 a Junkers 188 was shot down and crashed in adjacent marshland, two crew members survived. Four days later, believing the site safe, the RAF buried the wreckage where it lay undisturbed for 44 years until in 1986 an excavation uncovered a 1,000 kg bomb!



Kirton Creek by Bertram Priestman

The romance of the place has been an inspiration to poets, writers and musicians. Florence Cox, Felixstowe poet wrote *The Three Sisters Barge, Kirton*

*Creek*, Ann Quinton, Kirton author of detective novels set her book *To Mourn a Mischief* there; David Young composed a song called *Kirton Creek* and Bertram Priestman R.A. painted this lovely water colour in 1932.



I left Kirton in 1970 and spent most of my adult life away from Suffolk but was drawn back to the place which I always called "home" when I retired and moved to Woodbridge. Visiting the Creek now it is hard to imagine those days when families thronged there. Nature has reclaimed the beach and river wall where we used to picnic. The Mill River has become clogged with rushes. The landscape is still beautiful but feels empty. It is a popular place for walkers and bird watchers but no longer a part of the life of the village as it once was. Change is inevitable as the use of land and river alters but I still have happy memories of a childhood there.

## Jane Bradburn

*(With thanks to Len Lanigan, Local History Recorder and the people of Kirton for their memories.)*

## Peter Wain

### Bawdsey Man Convicted of Murder

On 1<sup>st</sup> June 1445 John Squyer was appointed parson of Alderton. He was clearly an ambitious and influential man. At some stage he had become Chaplain to William de la Pole, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl and later 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Suffolk. He was also appointed as the Duke's Receiver General, the person responsible for collecting all money due to the Duke. In 1446 he sat on a Commission together with the Sheriff of Suffolk and the Abbot of Sybton concerning the death of two men. His connection with the Duke of Suffolk and the instability caused by Jack Cade's rebellion in 1450 was to be his undoing because in that year he was murdered.

William de la Pole was the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Suffolk and he caught the eye of his King, the young Henry VI. This was eventually to cause his downfall. In 1444 de la Pole was required by the King to travel to France to negotiate the marriage of Henry to Margaret of Anjou. He completed this task successfully but as part of the negotiations Henry had instructed him to surrender Anjou and Maine to the French King. At the time this was kept a secret but when it later became known, set against a background of other considerable English losses in France, including the whole of Normandy, de la Pole was blamed. The loss of all of this land meant that



the only English possession in northern France was now Calais. Thus the achievements of Edward III at Crecy and Poitiers and Henry V at Agincourt had been permanently undone.

De la Pole had enjoyed considerable influence at court for a long period. It was as result of his part in the marriage negotiations for his King that he was created firstly Duke of Suffolk then Warden of the Cinque Ports and Constable of Dover. However the losses in France coupled with jealousy of his power and influence at court created many enemies and in January 1450 he was indicted for treason. The King intervened and, not wishing to see his favourite executed, banished him from England for five years. On 30<sup>th</sup> April 1450 de la Pole sailed from Ipswich to go into exile but in the Dover Strait his ship was intercepted and despite the King's letter of safe conduct his head was cut off with a sword, the body and head being deposited on the beach at Dover.

The following month, in May 1450, a gathering of about three thousand men at Ashford in Kent marked the beginning of Jack Cade's rebellion. Their complaints were about the perceived evil influence of those surrounding the King, the loss of territory in France and loss of control of the seas. The rebellion did not last long and by July Cade had been hunted down and killed. Nonetheless the rebellion had spread across southern and eastern England including to Suffolk. There were distur-

bances in Hadleigh and Beccles and in July 1450, the month before John Squyer's death, the vicar of Melton was attacked and robbed by a mob.

With the fall of the unpopular Duke came retribution to those who profited from his influence for example Sir John Hampden, the Duke's steward, was killed at Flint castle and the Duke's secretary was arrested.

It was against this background that John Squyer died. Probably, following the Duke's disgrace and death, he had quickly retired to the relative obscurity of the village of Alderton, but that was not to be enough to keep him safe. On the Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> August 1450 a crowd of his parishioners including people from Ramsholt and Sutton, gathered in the village in Alderton. The scene can be imagined. Armed with swords, cudgels or farm implements, they marched on the rectory. Infected by the turmoil of Cade's rebellion they shouted their grievances and cursed the Duke of Suffolk. They cursed the man, who as Receiver General, had collected their money for the Duke. Surrounding the rectory, stones were hurled and windows were smashed. Eventually they broke down the door. Roughly pushing aside the Rector's servants they grabbed John Squyer who had attempted to hide himself. Binding him, he was manhandled, pulled and dragged, shouting in terror and for mercy, into the road. In the shadow of his church and the long gone tower of St Andrews and within sight of the carving of the club wielding

wodewose, or wild man, over the porch door, he was held down over a hastily made block and there, in the street, his head was struck off with a sword. Thus he suffered the same fate as his mentor, the Duke.

We do not know the names of all of those from Alderton, Ramsholt and Sutton brought before the Commissioners of Oyer and Terminer indicted for this terrible killing. We do however know of one defendant, a man named Alan Martyn “*of Bawedeseý co Suffolk*”. We know he was indicted and convicted for the part he was said to have played in this killing because following his conviction he complained to the King about his fate. In March 1452 the King pardoned him saying “*he was indicted of malice though guiltless*”, although on what grounds is a mystery.

Perhaps Alan Martyn was a man who at that time sailed close to the wind because three years later the King again pardoned him. What he had done is not known but the King’s pardon extended to “*all felonies, trespasses, offences, misprisons, negligences and other misdeed and any consequent outlawries*”.

In both pardons Martyn was described as a “*gentilman*”. He must have been a man of some standing because thirteen years later, in 1463, he was involved in another court case. This time it was in the Court of Common Pleas in London and was a claim for a debt of £40. In the record of the proceedings

he was described as a “*Mercer*”, a dealer in textiles, particularly silk and velvet. We also know it was the same Alan Martyn because he is described as “*son and executor of Isabelle Wallere, lately of Ramsholt, Suffolk*”. Alan Martyn claimed that someone called Richard Martyn of Sutton owed his mother £40. Isabelle had died in 1457 and Alan made the claim on her behalf. It seems the money had been lent in 1441 but Richard Martyn claimed he had been released from the debt in 1460 and produced a paper purportedly signed by Alan Martyn in Sutton to show that. Alan Martyn disputed it was his document and signature and so the Court ordered a jury to be sworn in October, later that year, to decide the competing claims. How the case was concluded we do not know.

Why was Alan Martyn falsely accused of murder? Who were his enemies and who bore him a grudge? His mother Isabelle held land in Alderton, Bawdsey and Hollesley as a tenant for her life however the land was owned by John Crees. The year before his mother died John Crees transferred the land to three men one of whom was John Squyer. Perhaps as a result of this there was bad feeling and dispute between Isabelle and her new landlords or her son and the new landlords. Perhaps knowing of this the other landlords, Thomas Brews and John Wardyn, made the accusation after the death of the co owner.

Whatever the reason, when you next travel through Alderton and pass the

church, spare a thought for the luckless John Squyer.

Peter Wain

## James Skellorn

### Artists of the Deben : Annie Turner

All of us who spend our time on or in or beside the Deben feel its magic in providing a place to relax, absorb the natural world around us and restore our senses and equilibrium. For Annie Turner, it is the inspiration and focus of her art. Annie grew up in Waldringfield where generations of her family before her had lived and worked on the River. Put simply, she is a ceramic artist of national renown. Working from her studio formerly in London, she has



Mussel Bed

had exhibitions all over the country, in Europe and in New York and Chicago. Her ceramics are to be found in the Victoria and Albert museum in London, the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff and the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge.



The Sinker

There is an immediate sense of recognition when you see her work: colours, textures and shapes that are familiar to denizens of the Deben. There are mussel shells, fossilised sharks' teeth, crab claws, fishermen's nets, marsh sluice gates, mussel boxes and rusting jetties. Here is a description of her work from notes from a recent exhibition:

*"Her work is inextricably tied to the Deben and its surrounding environment. She explores movements and tides of the water, changing seasons and the passage of time in her delicate and fragile yet strong sculptures. Many of her pieces appear rusted from the repeated firing and use of oxides and slips. This helps convey the idea of time and its effect on nature. Her forms have titles such as 'net' 'sinker' 'mussel box' 'bar buoy'.*

*Annie describes them as "objects that trigger the memory". The encrusted forms of sinkers, ladders and sluices convey the texture and weather of this water land.*

*The richly layered "meander bowls" are impressed with fragments and detritus,*

*feathers, fossilised fragments of sharks' teeth and salty tidelines – nature's subtle residue – observed and recorded on walks beside the river."*

Annie trained at Bristol Polytechnic and the Royal College of Art, yet clearly the key formative influence on her work is her upbringing by the River. Her father Jim sailed on the river all his life. Her Uncle George was boatman at Waldringfield and renowned racing helmsman on the river. (See Pg.36) Annie has raced and cruised on the river all her life from Waldringfield. In summer her pretty lugsail dinghy bobs on its mooring off the beach.

This year she had an exhibition in London with Hervé Jézéquel. Titles of some of her pieces included '*Loders Cut*', '*Kings Fleet*', '*Ramsholt Sluice*' and '*Church Farm Sluice*'.

One series of pieces that interest me



River Ladders

are called river ladders. They are ladders where the uprights converge at top and bottom to form an elongated oval shape. They are displayed in sets of perhaps four or six or eight. The rungs of each ladder are parallel, but

the angle of rungs changes from ladder to ladder and then each ladder varies subtly in colour from its neighbour. They could be inspired by rusty and weathered structures on the River. The titles '*Sea Breeze*', '*Tide Line*' and '*Wind Against Tide*' suggest they are also about the surface of the water and the curves and parallel lines made by the waves. I also love the mussel shells which capture with startling accuracy the subtle colour, shades and texture of these familiar things.

A simple way to see images of Annie's work is to Google '*Annie Turner Ceramics*' and this will produce images from her exhibition this year.

In the past two years Annie has moved her studio from London to Sudbourne near Orford. She will hold an open studio this autumn. She can be contacted by email:

[annieturner@mac.com](mailto:annieturner@mac.com)

James Skellorn

# Boats of the Deben

Pete Clay

## Nirvana- a pretty boat on a pretty river

The magic of the River Deben, for me, stems largely from its sights and sounds that evoke memories, relating mostly to times spent aboard boats.

In my case the boats in question both came from the drawing board of the artist Albert Strange. In 1882, at the tender age of 27 he was appointed Principal of the new government funded School of Art in Scarborough. He was an important member of the Scarborough school long with such names as Ernest Dade and Frank Mason.

*"Strange's marine paintings have the quality and immediacy that stem from an exceptional knowledge of and love for his subject.....his fluid and assured style marked him as a distinctive*

*master of his art".* (Tony Watts, writing in the Albert Strange biography).

In addition Strange was an accomplished yacht designer. He had a keen eye for an elegant sheer, shapely bow, and stern. His elliptical canoe sterns are now famous, often imitated but rarely equalled. His seaworthy canoe- yawls, mostly quite small, appealed (and still appeal) to the 'corinthian' yachtsman eager for adventure. It is a credit to his mastery of the type that two of the most cruised yachts, 'Firefly' and 'Sheila', are both engine-less.

I was brought up from an early age sailing the Albert Strange 7-ton gaff yawl Firefly. Bought in 1934 by my grandfather Henry Clay, she had been sailed on the Norfolk Broads and east coast rivers, occasionally with his friend Arthur Ransome. Ransome was evidently impressed by the way in which Henry's wife, Gladys, coped with four children on such a small boat, for, in 1937 he dedicated his children's novel *'We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea'* to Mrs Henry Clay" (Albert Strange on Yacht Design Construction and Cruising- Clay and Miller.)

My earliest memories of the Deben were sailing holidays aboard 'Firefly' in the 50s when she had passed to my father's ownership. In 1982, after my parents moved to Woodbridge 'Firefly' lay for many years on a mooring above Methersgate. (She is now owned by my brother Jamie- completing 80 years ownership by the same family).





In 1988 my wife and I bought the 9-ton Albert Strange yawl 'Nirvana'. She had been built in 1925 for a Dublin dentist for cruising with his wife and two boys. Later she passed to the editor of the Cork Times. When he died his American widow cruised extensively in Irish waters and on the west coast of Scotland.

Weeks spent cruising alone with her skinny Irish paid hand, with whom she evidently got on very well, no doubt might have raised a few moral eyebrows in those days but for the wide difference in social standing between owner and employee!

'Nirvana' stayed in Irish waters and northern England until we bought her in 1988/9 from another dentist- the third in her life- in Whiterock Co. Down. He lived in this staunchly protestant area as a catholic with his six or seven children protected by the fact that his dental practice was on the Falls Road in Belfast. A dentist's drill is an effective potential weapon! His neighbour in Whiterock was, by contrast, a judge, and I remember being much impressed by the perimeter of his property being marked by a 10ft. high razor wire fence. Such was life in the province in 1988.

In June 1990 after a glorious season on the Clyde and nearby waters, notwithstanding being plagued by incessant deck leaks, we began the trip from Glasgow to Woodbridge- 850 miles, whichever route you take. We chose the anti-clockwise Land's End route over the clock-wise Caledonian Canal and east coast route. I can't remember why but it was a fortuitous

decision, as it happened, because we sprang a leak north of Dublin and a 4-hour beat to windward baling constantly with a bucket brought us to Howth. Here we received the best of Irish welcomes, caulked the leak and met a man who gave me the address of one of the sons of the original owner. I immediately sent him a postcard and asked if I might visit him in Gosport-on-Sea upon our return.

The trip to the Deben via Lymington and Brighton is a story in itself but suffice it to say that, had we known before we started, what we discovered about the boat on our arrival, we probably should not have embarked on such a journey! Optimism, youth and ignorance are sometimes the handmaids of good fortune!



A trip to see the afore-mentioned son of the original owner was rewarded by the gift of numerous old photographs removed from his albums including images of her being built, photos of her launch day in 1925, and many more- completing, what is now, a full pictorial record of her life to date.

'Nirvana's' restoration in Maldon, Essex by my shipwright younger brother Jamie took 18 months. She was given a new deck and deck beams, several new ribs, new garboard planks and a new engine. The unsightly doghouse was removed and the original coach-roof restored. The cockpit was rebuilt as close as possible to the original Albert Strange plans that we found in the Mystic Seaport Museum in Maine,



USA. Of course restoration never stops and one is always conscious of the need to maintain or improve a classic boat's condition.

This year heralds the 25<sup>th</sup> year of our ownership but, as the lead violist of the Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Harry Danks, said of his beautiful Amati viola *"I don't own it; I'm just the present caretaker"*.

So about 15 years ago 'Nirvana' arrived in the Deben and now swings on a mooring occupied previously by Frank Knights' cutter the 'Yet' below Troublesome Reach, quite near to her little Albert Strange sister 'Sheila'.

In many ways the Deben is the ideal river- protected, varied and interesting. There are many places to go ashore and welcoming anchorages at Waldringfield and Ramsholt, both with the promise of hot food ashore. The sailing can be challenging and, with 5ft draft, passing through Loder's Cut or the East channel at Waldringfield can be exciting and often ill-advised! The Deben entrance deters the timid yachtsman and commands respect from every sailor. The sole occasion that 'Nirvana' ever made the entrance on a falling tide it had a profoundly humbling effect on the owner and polished the barnacles off the bottom of the iron keel!

On 17<sup>th</sup> August this year we left Walton with 3 reefs, a small heads'l and a strong offshore wind. After a few boisterous hours we charged in over the Deben bar and on up the river with the flood tide. To arrive safely on our mooring, stow the gear and sit listening to the gulls, curlews and godwits was a pleasure that has to be experienced.

We've made trips to Holland, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway. She has over-wintered twice in Denmark, but returning to the Deben is always an emotional homecoming.

Pete Clay

## Deben Reflections

### Holidays in Waldringfield



As a child I was brought up in Mill Hill in North London but holidays were always spent in Waldringfield. My first visit would have been in 1929, but I can't say I remember much about it.

We came as a large family, with my sister Jill and brothers Bob and Patrick accompanied by a Mother's help. Ah, those were the days. Mother drove the car, but father always came by train. My parents booked various houses in the village for six weeks every year including Rickety Nook (long disappeared), Deben House, Dunoon (now called Skye Cottage) and Lydford (now called Swallow Hills and where I caught chicken pox).

Our days followed a pattern. Mornings were spent swimming and rowing. We rowed everywhere – Stonner, the Tips and Ramsholt. There was definitely no

outboard for us Ogden children.

In the afternoons we would go further afield in father's Austin 16 with trips to Shingle Street, East Lane, Bawdsey, Dunwich and Walberswick. Trips to the Heath were met with a groan as we realised we would miss our sea bathe. We always enjoyed the Heath despite the fact that the game of French Cricket invariably ended in tears. Idyllic times and the sun was always shining, or so the memory tells me.

When we came back after the war, dinghy sailing was just taking off and we were all keen to try. We acquired two 10 ft. clinker dinghies called "Judy" and "Tina". As none of us knew anything about sailing, my mother thought she ought to learn to sail herself and asked George Turner (junior) for some lessons. All went well until George suddenly called out "*Luff her*". My mother said "*what do you mean?*" and the reply came back "*well-um, just luff her*".

We children wanted to try ourselves. I read it all up in my sailing book, jumped in the boat and managed to sail straight into the island. Not much changes!

All was not lost, Donald Haig, father of Andrew Haig, saw that something needed to be done. Dono, as he was called, was a rather severe looking man, but with a great sense of humour and as teenagers, we were rather

frightened of him.

Dono had a lovely wooden four ton yacht. He would take us out and bark commands like “*free the topping lift*” or “*pull in the jib sheet*”. Sheets? We thought they were on the bed at home but we quickly learnt the hard way. We had some lovely sails until we stuck on the bar in a strong wind. We were sent below and heard some fruity language from the deck. History does not relate how we got off, but to this day I still hate that bar.

Part of our sail training was tying knots. We used to row over to the Tips with Dono and sat on the beach learning our knots and splices. I became quite a dab hand at a Turk’s Head. We learnt how to splice rope and even wire. Looking back on this, how lucky we were to have had such a good grounding.

We progressed to Dragonflies and had many happy years sailing dragonfly number 2 “Fantee” built by Nunn Brothers around 1949.

After I married, Douglas and I sailed his 32ft. wooden sloop “Janora” and, now at the age of 85, I have gone full circle and, these days, and I am sailing her 9 ft. tender “Check”.

Roll on another season.

Liz Kennedy

## Correspondence

### *From Africa*

**email 19 July from: Richard Howe to the Treasurer**

*Dear treasurer i fear i am a delinquent..so have sent you 50 pds for 2013 and 14, 25 pa after that. I just received the Spring edition...*

*I was born in Woodbridge, live in Africa but still have close ties to the Deben: a house in Alderton and a boat on the river moored at Kirton creek - I shall send a few whimsical historical notes to the editor that may be of interest to the your readers.*

*Please record at the next meeting my humble admiration for the classiness of the magazine, I read it from cover to cover*

### *Spirit of Place*

**email 28 August from: Jane Bradburn**

“.....I am glad you are happy with the article – I wanted to say something profound about a ‘sense of place’ but didn’t really know how to express it – the idea that you are connected to a place, its history, geography and culture through your childhood experiences – maybe you can weave some words in your editorial. I think it’s a very interesting notion and links to our shared interest in oral history and place. I see that there are now walks which you can do where you listen to recordings of people’s memories of the place you are walking through. Wouldn’t it be fun to do that for the River Deben.....”

# **The River Deben Association**

## **Officers and Committee**

**October 2014**

<b>Chairman</b>	Robin Whittle - DEP <a href="mailto:robin.whittle@btinternet.com">robin.whittle@btinternet.com</a> 01394 382930
<b>Vice Chairman</b>	Robert Simper - History <a href="mailto:robertsimper@hotmail.com">robertsimper@hotmail.com</a>
<b>Treasurer</b>	Peter Thubron <a href="mailto:pjthubron@yahoo.co.uk">pjthubron@yahoo.co.uk</a>
<b>Secretary</b>	Wendy Brown <a href="mailto:candwseadrake@timetalk.co.uk">candwseadrake@timetalk.co.uk</a> 01473 259674
<b>Magazine Editor</b>	David Bucknell <a href="mailto:rasmusbuck@aol.com">rasmusbuck@aol.com</a> 07803612059
<b>Website Administrator</b>	Adrian Judge DEP, Access. <a href="mailto:adrianjudge@keme.co.uk">adrianjudge@keme.co.uk</a>
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	Richard Smithson <a href="mailto:richard.smithson@gmail.com">richard.smithson@gmail.com</a>
<b>Peter Clay</b>	Maritime Woodbridge <a href="mailto:pete@peterhenryclay.co.uk">pete@peterhenryclay.co.uk</a>
<b>Veronica Falconer</b>	Planning <a href="mailto:veronica.falconer@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk">veronica.falconer@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk</a>
<b>Anne Moore</b>	Footpaths, DEP, Access Group, Woodbridge. <a href="mailto:annepeter7@taktalk.net">annepeter7@taktalk.net</a>
<b>Simon Read</b>	DEP, Project, Saltmarsh Recovery, Environment. <a href="mailto:jacoba@simonread.demon.co.uk">jacoba@simonread.demon.co.uk</a>
<b>James Skellorn</b>	Saltmarsh Survey <a href="mailto:james.skellorn@barkergotlee.co.uk">james.skellorn@barkergotlee.co.uk</a>
<b>Will Green</b>	Waldringfield, Yachting <a href="mailto:ww.green@yahoo.co.uk">ww.green@yahoo.co.uk</a>

Address for Correspondence: 67 The Throughfare Woodbridge IP12 1AH





Avocets over the Butley - Robin Whittle



River Deben Association

**AUTUMN MEETING**  
**Woodbridge Community Hall**  
**Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2014 at 7.30pm**

A talk  
**‘Defence of the River Walls’**  
by  
**Mr. Andrew Hawes**

Andrew Hawes is a Chartered Geotechnical Engineer whose experience includes rebuilding the levees and river walls along the River Mississippi following hurricane Katrina.

He is currently advising the DEP on repairs to breaches of the river walls following the tidal ‘surge’.