

The Deben



52 Spring 2016

The River Deben Association

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March 2016

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52 Spring 2016

- I. Officers and Committee**
- II. Contents**
 - 1. Editorial**
 - 3. Chairman's Report**
 - 3. News From Woodbridge Riverside.** - Anne Moore
 - 5. Powerful Stuff!** - Haidee Stevens
 - 7. Waldringfield Mysteries** - Bob Crawley
 - 8. Swifts in Woodbridge** - Jenny James
 - 11. An Introduction to the History of the Waldringfield Huts**
- Linda Wilkins
 - 16. Early Days of Photography - Thomas Naunton Waller**
- Stan Baston
 - 18. Artists and Writers - Alison Calvesbert** - with David Bucknell
 - 22. Living on the River** - Jane Bradburn and friends
 - 26. *Nirvana* - back to the Baltic** - Pete Clay
 - 31. Boats of the Deben - *Maid Marion PZ61*** - Peter Hunt

Cover: '*Heritage*' Memory Box - **Alison Calvesbert**



Editorial

Making a Journey

"It is good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters, in the end."

Ernest Hemingway

The theme of this edition is journeys. My journey to getting this edition to you has been an interesting one.

I have finally managed to track down Linda Wilkins in between her voyages aboard *Barnacle Bill* and together we have been on a 'journey' editing her article on the Waldringfield Huts. Linda's energy and enthusiasm could have given rise to many articles and I hope this one will be the first of many. Linda herself has been on a 'journey' - as through her research she has engaged with many fascinating people and characters all with a story to tell about their particular hut and the history of Waldringfield.

Thomas Naunton Waller's early photographs of Waldringfield and the Deben have been painstakingly reproduced by Stan Baston and now form an important part of the historical archive.

Bob Crawley poses some intriguing questions for us to ponder on in his 'Waldringfield Mysteries'.

Jenny James tells us about the extraordinary journey swifts make as they travel to and from this country.

Jane Bradburn has been on a journey which started out with a night on a

houseboat and has resulted in her meeting the people who live by the river and recording their stories.

Pete Clay writes about his journey in *Nirvana* to Denmark and the Baltic which he will continue this Summer.

I spent much of my childhood in Cornwall and have always been intrigued by PZ 61 moored off Ramsholt. Anne Moore managed to track down her owner Peter Hunt, and he writes about the journeys this historic boat has made during its life on and off the water.

We welcome Haidee Stevens to the magazine, and for those who journey on foot around the Deben her article is important.

Anne Moore continues her 'perambulations' along the riverside and offers us her observations and commentary on some of the important developments.

After my initial meeting with the artist Alison Calvesbert our paths did not cross; so having read her biography 'on line', I posed questions that intrigued me. Alison's answers are eloquent testimony to her energy and enthusiasm as a person and an artist.

Thank you to those of you who 'contributed' following the last edition of 'The Deben'.

We now have a number of recordings of people talking about the River Deben and at some point I hope to develop these as a sound archive of the river - 'Deben Voices'. These will accompany 'Deben Reflections' which many of you have contributed to.

I hope your 'journey' through the magazine will be an interesting one!



River Deben Association

Chairman's Report

It has been a wet and windy Winter and we are looking forward to a wonderful sunny and warm Summer!

This should be my last report as Chairman, according to the Constitution. Unfortunately, I have not found a successor and would be willing to carry on for a further year if that is your wish.

Committee: We have now found a replacement for Peter Thubron as Treasurer. James Goldsworthy has kindly offered his services and has been co-opted on to the committee. We still have not found a replacement for Wendy Brown as Hon. Secretary and would appreciate a volunteer to come forward. We are also looking for a Website administrator. On a happier note Robert Simper has agreed to become the Honorary President of the Association. I hope you confirm this with your vote at the AGM.

Planning Applications: Applications for two housing estates have caused the committee concern. Both can be seen from the Deben and will affect the tranquillity of its environs. The first is an Appeal against the current refusal for up to 560 dwellings at Candlefoot Road, Felixstowe. The second is for up to 215 dwellings at Dukes Park, Ipswich Road, Martlesham, Suffolk. The RDA has sent letters to the Suffolk Coastal District

Council objecting to both schemes.

Whisstocks Project: We still await the start of construction. There have been further changes to planning application. The restaurant size is reduced and the building will now incorporate a flat. I understand that the Bank has now given the green light for work to start.

River Walls: Phase 2 of the Waldringfield project (Flood Cell 10) has been completed apart from enhancement to the saltmarsh. This project has included the creation of a wild life reserve. Work on Flood Cells 1, Bawdsey Marshes, and Flood Cell 4, Shottisham Creek is expected to start later this year.

Research Projects: The Survey of Loder's Cut Island is beginning to show interesting results. Readings at the twelve posts are taken in the Spring and Autumn of each year. So far only four sets of readings have been taken so it is early days to expect much useful information. The committee has agreed to support a Research Pilot Study to investigate the effect of Shore Crabs and Ragworms on the deterioration/collapse of saltmarshes. £500 has been allocated to support this project. We are hoping that this study will take place on the saltmarsh near Waldringfield but no agreement has been reached yet. There are a number of hoops that we have to negotiate with regard to getting permission to carry out the study – EA, NE, MMO, Landowner, AONB to name but a few.

AGM: This takes place on Thursday, 28th April. Our guest speaker will be Emma Hay of Natural England.

Robin Whittle

News From Woodbridge Riverside and Beyond . . .

There has been a lot of work going on along the riverside in Woodbridge this winter.

The erection of 'pop-up' Offices on the Whisstock's, now demolished, site, caused some excitement as many observers thought construction work on the proposed new project there, was about to begin.

Overheard pieces of conversation, and expressed observations, reminded me of 'The Builder' story, from a series of *Topsy and Tim* books, by Jean Adamson, which some of you may remember hearing read to you as children or, like me, you enjoyed reading to them, in the seventies. In the days before children became kids.

' "It looks as if they're going to make a start" said the milkman.' This was printed under a picture of the pair, standing and watching machinery arrive on a building site opposite their house.

This winter, however, at Whisstock's, it was the Environment Agency who had come to 'make a start' - on raising and strengthening the flood walls.

Work done in the eighties had begun to slip and was, also, considered no longer high enough, from lessons learnt during flooding from the surge tides of December 2013.

The plan is to work in three phases, the first of which, from Tide

Mill Way to the Railway Bridge, is now complete.

In January, more radical work began on the stretch down to the Cruising Club, where circular piles have been driven down eight metres deep at about one metre intervals on both sides of the footpath, the surface of which had been slipping and dropping, due to the original sheet-piling shifting off perpendicular, causing the surface of the path to drop.

The plan is to put wire caging between these lines of circular piles and then to brace them to the original sheet-piling, before resurfacing the path with a topping of about 400 mm of dense concrete; providing a stable and durable walk-way. The last stretch, down to the Rowing Club, should begin in July and is expected to be completed by November. These last two sections done as they were, in two stages, enabled necessary access to the Cruising Club throughout.



Photo Walter Baxter

Luckily, none of this disturbance had begun when we were graced by a flock of starlings that flew in and gave a mesmerising display of the sort of thing that starlings do, late afternoon in the winter. Swooping and dropping to

pack into the reed bed by the station, or the cedar tree by the level crossing at Everson's, to then *whoosh* out and upwards like a black Catherine-wheel spun off its peg, being joined all the time by arriving groups that flew in to take part in the fun.

People were rooted to the spot as they stopped, searching for their smartphones, to capture the moment - the spectacle. "A murmuration", a woman near me said, uncertainly. "A murmuration of starlings, I think it's called" "Oh, is it," I replied, as I looked up at what had now become a fluid, fish-like shape slipping over the sky.

Walking homeward up Quay Street, it seemed that the huge numbers of displaced pigeons seeking refuge from the demolition of Whisstocks, where they had roosted since it had been first built, had seen the starlings too and were trying to copy their formations. I had not noticed them quite like that before.

Jenny James may have mentioned in her writing, something about the displaced swifts too, that have lost their breeding places to the demolition squad when Whisstocks site was razed.

More recently, I have heard reports of holes being dug at Whisstocks as if the removal of the heavily contaminated soil which must be transported by the truck-load, for safe depositing, some distance northwards, had begun. But on checking, to date all I have seen, is someone using a grinding tool behind the old sectional floodgate to the site. This floodgate has to now be replaced at the developers expense, due to the Environment Agency being no longer willing to pay; all adding to the

overall cost of development, which has led to further planning applications for variations to include more residential accommodation, to cover the extra, apparently unforeseen, costs. Unforeseen, that is, by the Developer's Agent, but no surprise to some of us locals !

The first thought was to drive deep piling down, to obviate the need for soil removal, but the Railway Company was not happy to have risk of the vibration disturbing rail safety. So, to date, (29th February,) nothing yet "going to make a start", after all.

* * *

Not far away, at the Tide Mill Yacht Harbour, there has been much activity



with heavy digger machinery arriving in the early autumn, trundling through the narrow right angled gap between the Granary Cottage and our iconic old Tide Mill, to make a start on a big project to improve marina facilities triggered, in part, by an urgent need to repair bank slippage, caused in that surge again, to the upriver wall of the south marina.

Marina owner, Richard Kember, showed me photographs of the collapsed bank and an aerial view of the layout

as it had been before work commenced. I was also shown a drawing of the intended changes.

Sheet-piling is already in position to reinforce the damaged wall and extended round the now blunted nose of the area between the two marinas, giving scope to moor boats bow forward rather than alongside as before and enabling the cutting of an access point, for craft coming in for repair, to a planned new, long ramp: giving access to the work building that was erected a year or so ago.

However, the deluges of this winter have inhibited progress. The spoil produced will be spread over the existing ground, raising its height by point six of a metre, to the level at which the flood water settled in 2013.

Unfortunately, this spoil must be dry before spreading: it, otherwise, simply puddles and remains soggy. Ridged heaps have been formed to clamp the dry spoil and prayers are being said for sun, sun and more sun . . .

* * *

I wonder if you spotted my, (I would like to say, deliberate) mistake, in our previous issue, when writing about Frank Knights, who, of course, did not own the steam yacht, *Myra*. My wires had become crossed and I'd confused seeing Peter Derby in that boat go down river for the weekend, as well as Frank and Christine, on board their oyster catcher, *Yet*.

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Haidee Stevens

Suffolk Estuaries Officer
Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB

Powerful stuff !

The storm surge of December 2013 damaged the flood defence wall at Martlesham Creek. To the landward, the freshwater habitats were considering a salty future. Grass fields became flooded for a time and wondered what being saltmarsh might feel like. Walkers peered into the breach. Landowners mulled over an expensive problem; what to do next wasn't a foregone conclusion. Should the wall be rebuilt stronger and taller to resist the next surge, or should it be left alone, allowing the land to flood with the tide? Should the decision-makers allow nature to take its course?

To the delight of walkers the decision was made to save the footpath and rebuild the broken sections, but with a new profile – wider in cross-section with a more gentle slope onto the land than before. In two places the wall would also be lower in height than the failed original, so that at the highest tides, flood waters would flow calmly across these 'sills' and flood the land temporarily; with new sluice pipes running through the wall to allow the salty guest to leave politely at low tide. But what type of material would provide a good walking surface and be resistant to being washed away when the walls overtop? Not only would this decision be crucial to allow safe use of the path, (after the flood has subsided, I add in haste – please never use a path with water flowing across it) but

it would protect the wall from damage too. Not to leave this to chance, a few different types of surfaces were installed and the public asked what they thought of them. So far the surfaces haven't been tested by overtopping, but there has been a veritable 'flood' of opinions!



The AONB organised a Footpath Surface Survey and (so far) nearly half of the people who have (kindly) taken part online or face to face have been walking with at least one dog. This was the statistic that first caught my eye. The second observation was how differing in opinions we all are when it comes to what we like to walk on! The survey is still running and you'll have to wait until it's completed before we announce the winner I'm afraid!

The dog statistic is notable, because you and I have enormous power and influence not only in the choice of footpath surfaces, but when it comes to the impact of us humans on the wildlife of the estuary, particularly regarding the birds and especially in winter. The science and evidence behind this is that of all the potentially disturbing activities 'dogs' and 'bait digging' are the top two causes of bird disturbance in our estuaries and

in the Deben that mainly leaves 'dogs' as number one.

In the winter-time we enjoy the spectacle that is the arrival and residence of huge flocks of migrating birds to the estuaries. At low tide, with the mud exposed, they are intently and constantly feeding, stocking up on their energy reserves. At high tide, when their food is underwater, they are roosting or 'hanging about' quietly, saving energy until they can feed again. Repeated disturbance will deter birds from their preferred feeding areas and send them into the air, wasting precious energy. At high tide there is very little dry land left to roost on and birds are especially vulnerable at this time if people are walking close by and especially if a dog comes exploring down by the water or rooting around on the saltmarsh fringes.

It's ultimately up to the dog-walker to



decide whether or not to snap the lead on for a while. The multiplier effect is large – by making this small change in behaviour we can start to change the culture of dogs-off-leads being the norm next to the water where the wildlife is so sensitive.

The power is in our hands!

The Martlesham Footpath Surface Survey is still running. If you've walked on the new surfaces you are invited to take part at <http://tinyurl.com/zshentk>



The Deben Estuary Plan was launched in 2015 by the Deben Estuary Partnership with the Environment Agency and the AONB. It sets out the range of interests, values and policies for the estuary; if you live near the Deben I'm sure you'll be interested in having a look:

<http://www.debenestuarypartnership.co.uk/index.html>

Bob Crawley

Waldringfield mysteries...

Waldringfield has an active Local History group and we have discovered a lot about our village. There are, however, some items that we've either not managed to resolve or agree upon. Some of these are just as relevant to the River as the village so you may be interested and even be able to help.

No. 1 Hugh Pearl

The headstone of Hugh Pearl lies in the cuttings at Kingfisher Creek. His secret seaplane mission ended in a crash landing on the Deben on 1st April 1939. The simple headstone is all that remains. An interesting object to look out for on your walks along our river front.

No. 2 Sailing Barges

We know the fate of most of the sailing barges associated with the village, but there are some gaps. *Kingfisher* and *Jumbo* have both been referenced but no traces found so far, although Robert Simper has some knowledge of the *Kingfisher* being used to collect mud for the cement works.

Packard's *Fossil* was sold to the Air Ministry in 1916 or 1920 (for use as a flying boat?) but we can't trace her after that.

Packard's *Nautilus* became a yacht/houseboat in 1935 and appeared in *Yachting Monthly* at the time. We think she was kept on the Deben and would love more information or photographs.



If you can help us we'd be delighted to hear from you. Our email is best waldringfieldHG@gmail.com or browse our website at: waldringfieldia.com where higher quality versions of the photographs are available.

Thankyou.

Waldringfield History Group

Swifts in Woodbridge - 'Where have all the swifts gone?'

We associate summer with the sound of swifts. From early May we can look up to see the black arrow-shape of this aerobatic migrant bird darting across the sky, in which they live as a fish lives in water. They sleep, feed and mate on the wing, only landing to lay eggs and to hatch them.

We can see swifts and the apparently similar, but unrelated, swallows, house martins and sand martins as they return to Britain to their nesting sites in spring and early summer. They are remarkably loyal, returning regularly to the same site in a roof space for many years. They are all aerial feeders, collecting insects as they fly over the Deben estuary and water meadows.

Swifts, the largest of these, are almost completely black in colour. Swallows, house martins and sand martins all have white under-parts and house martins have a white rump. Swifts are also the noisiest and the most communal. Hence we see these amazing 'screaming parties', especially in the evenings when they fly in noisy groups, high and low, turning, swooping and screaming.

Swifts have a remarkable life history. The newly fledged young birds, creep from their nests in a roof space to a gutter or tile from which they can launch themselves into the air. They remain airborne until they return to a nest site to breed nearly four years later. In that time they may have flown nearly 800,000 miles. A bird living for 18 years will have flown 4 million miles. How many times is that to the moon and back?

We know from using tracking devices that the birds fly south in stages through east and central Africa to southern Africa. They fly high so they are rarely observed. They remain in mixed age groups so by their third year some do return to Britain although they do not breed. These birds will be learning the migration routes and prospecting for nest sites. They are probably also the birds in the screaming parties - teenagers enjoying themselves before assuming adult responsibilities!

These extraordinary birds are declining in numbers. They are threatened by the loss of their nest sites in roof spaces. We modernise our homes by repairing the loose roof tiles and filling in the gaps in the soffits and thus exclude them. We have come to expect that they will always be there between the beginning of May and the end of July; but the number of swifts flying over Woodbridge in the summer appears to be diminishing. There



have always seemed to be swifts over the town and around the harbour but now there are fewer.

Last summer in Woodbridge we heard some bad news - swifts had been vainly trying to find nest sites in a newly restored building by the harbour. It appears that the spaces under the eaves where they were previously nesting had been blocked up. But we also heard some good news - the council planners had recommended that nest boxes for swifts should be part of the new building on the Whisstocks site by the harbour and that the developers had agreed to this.

The RSPB Woodbridge Group have started a campaign to encourage home owners to make provision for swifts to nest when making roof repairs and to persuade as many as possible to put up swift nest boxes. We carried out a survey in summer 2015 and from this we now know of 20 swift nesting sites in the area six of which are in central Woodbridge.

Swifts were obviously giving pleasure to many Woodbridge residents. I quote here from their emails.

‘On July 24th. from 20.30-21.00 hrs approx, observed up to 20 swifts wheeling and circling overhead in ‘fly-catching fest’, calling and screaming and flapping wings at high speed. They were in the area from Oak Lane Car Park up to Shire Hall and the convergence of Church and New Streets.’

‘June 30th. 10 Doric Place; up to 10 birds screaming; one bird seen emerging from under roof tiles next door; up to four birds clinging to guttering at my house’

‘I am one of the fortunate who have Swifts habitually nesting in my roof in Brook Street. They regularly circle with their youngsters just above roof height at the moment and I am seeing up to 25 or so grouping together in the evenings and then doing their firework impression going up vertically into the sky. There are about three nest holes in my house and the one next door, that we see being used. They have returned every year since I have been in this house and I am just so pleased that I receive them as my guests. As my home was built about 1825 I guess they have been here for much, much longer.’

We also learned that swifts would come to nest boxes particularly if a CD of swift sounds was played from a window near to the nest.



David Moreton

‘Three nest boxes were newly erected this spring and the CD was played every day during daylight hours. The swifts were observed flying very close to the house at window and chimney height on a number of occasions throughout June and July. From around July 19 groups of up to 15 swifts were flying very close to the source of the sound’.

‘We have, with the camera in the box, had the pleasure of following the development of three chicks which flew about two weeks ago.’

If these were groups of adults with non-nesting birds we can hope that they might have been prospecting for next year’s nest sites.

So, please will you, members of The River Deben Association, help to conserve swifts? SOS (Save Our Suffolk) Swifts is aiming to record all swift nest sites in the county by 2020. RSPB Woodbridge is running another survey in 2016 to which we ask you to contribute.

This year we are looking for swift nest sites either in roofs or nest boxes. Between early May and early August if you see swifts flying at roof level, particularly around the eaves,



this could be a nest site. You may see them flying directly into a hole or through a loose tile into the nest with food for the young. If it is your house you may hear them from the upstairs rooms. Another sign of breeding swifts is ‘screaming parties’. These are the groups of birds which fly around in a tight group, often in the evenings.

We would like to hear about nest sites and ‘screaming parties’. So please send us your records with your name, the site

(with address and post code if possible), the date and time. We would be glad to receive any extra details about the activity around your swift nest such as when the swifts arrived, how often you see them, whether you observed young around the nest etc.

Please send the information to this email address, where you can contact us for further information.

woodbridge-swifts2015@outlook.com

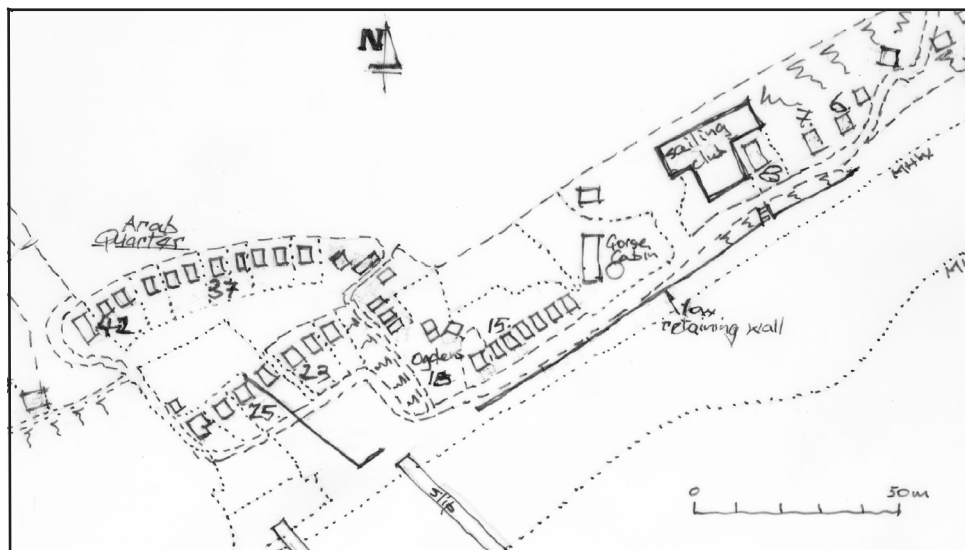
We are now ready to start the second phase of our campaign which is to publicise the need for maintaining existing nesting sites and to add more by putting up nest boxes. We will be working with builders, developers, the district council and groups from other organisations in Suffolk. We are now circulating information about this by leaflets and on our website, where you will find links to other useful websites.

www.rspb.org.uk/grou

Pictures courtesy of Swift Conservation

An Introduction to The History of Waldringfield Huts

On the approach from the river upstream to Waldringfield you will see along the foreshore and up along the banks the distinctive cluster of the Waldringfield Huts. In many ways the history of the huts reflects the socio-economic history of Waldringfield. Some were built on the site of the old coprolite digging and their development reflects the growth of Waldringfield as a sailing centre. The history of the huts is also the history of the families who have been a part of Waldringfield for many years.



In the late 1800s coprolite was extracted from Waldringfield cliffs for grinding into fertiliser. Digging created flat areas in the former cliff next to the beach and, during the 1900s the Church, who owned this land, allowed development of huts on these levelled sites, thus responding to the growth of sailing as a recreational pursuit.

The Earliest Huts

No one is really certain when the first huts were erected. Based on information from the late Reverend John Waller, hut No. 7 was built around 1895 on a levelled site, for the Reverend Arthur Prettyman Waller, the Vicar of Hemley and then passed on to the late Reverend John Waller.

Both hut No. 7 and the land around it are still in the ownership of the Glebe (The Church). It has recently been cleared of ivy and it will be interesting to observe what its future will hold, a decision that is still in the hands of the



Diocese. Constructed of timber it was originally intended as storage shed rather than as a beach hut. However, as a sign of things to come it was used as a changing room for the Waller ladies when they swam in the river after the cement works closed.

At about the same time Alfred Stollery, who was raised in Waldringfield, made an arrangement to rent part of the old coprolite workings on an annual basis from the Church and he put a gypsy caravan on the site known as *Gorse Cabin*. Alfred had apprenticed as a

cabinet maker in Woodbridge and then moved away to Surrey to set up his own business. He loved Waldringfield and wanted to maintain a connection with his home. His father Isaac, who was the ferryman at Waldringfield in the 1870s died young leaving his wife to bring up their 11 children.

In 1919, Alfred Stollery erected the distinctive WW1 'round hut' that still stands today where the gypsy caravan was initially situated. This 'round hut' was originally designed to sleep twenty men in a Flanders Field. It was the second hut on the site of the coprolite workings.

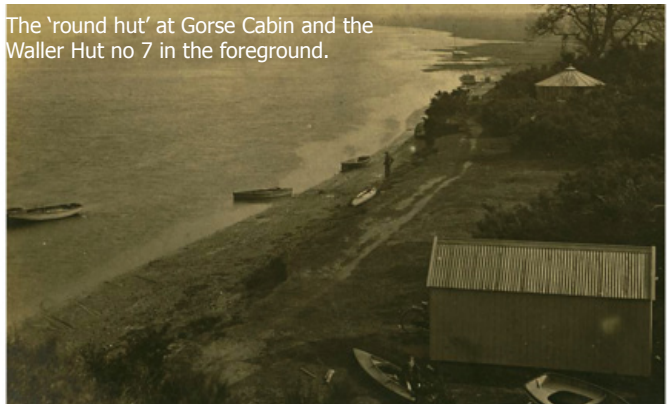
In 1953, Roger Stollery, the son of Alfred Stollery, whose family inherited *Gorse Cabin*, reroofed the 'round hut' with felt tiles.

In 1980 the corrugated iron walls which were rusting away were replaced by columns turning it into a shelter. In 2001, Roger removed the felt tiles and returned the design to a standing seam metal roof, using green roofing recycled from the Millennium Building at the All England Lawn Tennis Club, where Roger was the architect leading the design team. It is now used as a shelter by the family.

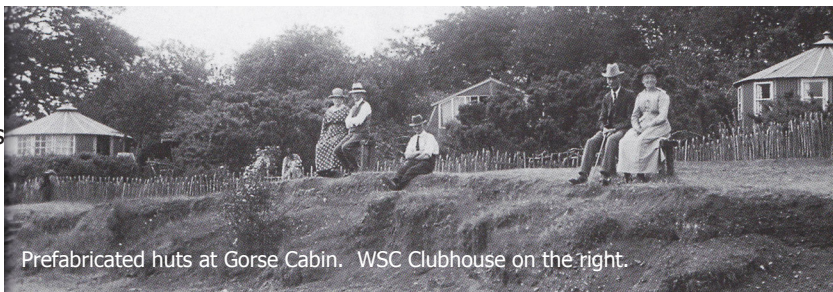
Behind this shelter is the 'long hut' which now provides the living quarters. This was built in 1928 by Arthur Stollery, Alfred's elder brother, who built a series of huts adjacent to *Gorse Cabin* in the 1920's.

An historic photograph shows a second WW1 'round hut' erected by Arthur Stollery, which became the first WSC Clubhouse, founded in 1921. The WSC members

The 'round hut' at Gorse Cabin and the Waller Hut no 7 in the foreground.



met in the first WW1 round hut until the second was erected. Alfred and Arthur Stollery were founder



Prefabricated huts at Gorse Cabin. WSC Clubhouse on the right.

members of the WSC and Alfred was Flag Officer in 1933.

The Ogden family also had one of the earliest huts and as with other early settlers had the prime positions and larger plots at No.18, south of the coprolite workings where WSC and *Gorse Cabin* are sited. Subsequently, their plot was sub-divided and part of it was given over to another family to build their hut. The family lived in North London and were one of the earliest DFLs – Down from London – and have been holidaying in Waldringfield for five generations. Their hut was built at around 1900 and is still in use. It was divided by a wooden partition; the larger section was the ladies changing room and the smaller one was for men and also contained oars, rowlocks and fishing gear. A second hut was erected shortly before or after the Second World War.

Hut Development

After WW1, Waldringfield began to develop as a sailing centre and a place to visit for the weekend. Houses sprung up alongside the road leading down to the river and near the quay; with each successive year seeing an increase in boats and yachts on the river. During the 1920s other recycled prefabricated and timber huts were built on Glebe land, so starting a tradition of hut structures of a portable nature that have remained similar up to today and in many cases built by family members. In the 1930s, huts spread south along the river bank, an indication of the trend and enthusiasm for Waldringfield as a sailing centre.



Ogden Hut

The huts erected recently could be described as cabins, or lodges, rather than huts, as they are larger, with more emphasis on design and increased comfort. Although they remain without services, at least one has been designed by an architect and has a wood burner and solar panels.

Most owners are still from sailing families and many have inherited them from past generations. Mike Nunn (founder of Seamark Nunn) at hut No.6 relates how its use and appearance have changed over time. Starting as a gear shed, the newly-refurbished structure caters for five generations of the Turner/Nunn family. Mike's Grandad, Jimmy Quantrill, put up the original hut and it was always thought of as 'Grandfather's hut.' He was a professional waterman and during WW2, when access to the foreshore was restricted, he took care of the boats. Mike explained that the huts on Glebe land were individually numbered and you

can still see the arrangement of the numbering sequence if you look closely.

In the 1920s, Thomas Naunton Waller had hut No. 8 next to the WSC 'round hut', after he retired from engineering in the Newcastle shipyards and returned to live in Waldringfield. According to Kit Clark, this hut was passed onto his children and then to Kit's cousin, before Kit and Joe leased it from the church. The original hut was replaced when Mike and Rani Pert acquired the tenure 25 years ago, when all the plots were leased from the Glebe on an annual basis. Kit and Joe Clark arranged the removal of the original hut with Reg Brown, owner of the boat yard, who burnt it in a skip.

Mike and Rani continued to use their hut for twenty five years, "as a changing room for Saturday racing and for storage of boats and bits" until the WSC approached them to buy some of the land at the rear of the property to build an extension to the changing rooms. A deal was done and they upgraded to the fairly substantial log cabin, with electricity connected that now occupies the site. Their first hut, No. 8, came under new ownership and moved further south and up the slope, overlooking the dinghy and laser park.

In 2002 there was a change of ownership of what was Glebe owned land to the hut owners. Rent for the leasehold of the individually owned huts was £5 per annum, payable to the Rector Trevor Waller, until the Church Commissioners took control and increased the rents to £200 per annum. In 2001, the Church Commissioners decided to sell some assets to raise finance. The front huts on the Glebe land, from the steps to the bottom end, were offered to the owners which led to the formation of the Waldringfield Hut Owners Ltd.

Downriver, heading south situated behind the river wall and the footpath is hut 29, that stands alone at the mercy of potential tidal surges. In 1953 the original hut went floating off but survived and was still back in its original location in 2002 when it came up for sale after being in the same ownership for twenty five years. Several newspaper articles, including one in '*The Telegraph*,' were incredulous at the asking price of £60,000 for a 'rundown beach hut with rotting timbers' that merely sat on the banks of the River Deben with the nearest sand or shingle beach at Felixstowe, nearly two hours walk away. The original hut was said to have been made from two very large bomb packing cases, reputedly acquired from a Debach airfield, and built by the 'Yanks' to entertain their lady friends before it came to Waldringfield. It has since been replaced with a new one of contemporary design. However, the new owners have retained pieces of the timber from the original hut with the markings of the bomb cases showing.

Perched high on the cliff, by the steps that lead up from the beach, is the hut known as 'The Look Out,' owned by Martin and Sylvie who, when resident, play



Scottish renditions on their bagpipes from 'The Lookout'. During WW2 this was a strategically-important position used by the armed services as a look-out and before them by river pilots watching for ships that needed steerage up the river. During the 1950s, Kit Clark's mother Nora Waller, had a hut there. It was designed as a carosel which could rotate. When Nora relinquished the hut it was moved to a friend's garden in Rendham.

Second World War and Operation Quicksilver

During the Second World War the growth of the huts was interrupted when Waldringfield became one of the chosen sites for Operation Quicksilver. Access to Waldringfield by non-permanent residents was restricted, as was access to the beach which was converted to a front line of defence, barricaded with barbed wire and sinister looking iron spikes. *Gorse Cabin* was used as a gun emplacement and a description of the ammunition is still chalked on the shed walls.

Part of this plan, Operation Quicksilver, involved positioning dummy landing craft with fake army encampments in East Coast Rivers. Waldringfield played a central role in all of this on the River Deben, along with the River Orwell. (See the account of the Big Bobs in 'The Deben' No. 41)

A large construction area with access to the river was needed. Several of the beach huts beyond hut No. 18 were removed or demolished and the grassy bank was built up to provide a ramp from which to launch the Big Bobs - now referred to as Admiral's Quay. The building of the landing craft took place on the field behind the huts and the concrete remains of parts of the launching ramp are still apparent.

The Arab Quarter

When the military left, this area was cleared and became the site for the 'Arab Quarter', on land owned by the late Rev. A.H.N. Waller, brother of the Rector Trevor Waller, who allowed the huts to be built. These are downstream of the WSC and create a second layer of huts with a green in between that is now used as a dinghy park. The Arab Quarter name is said to be a humorous term coined in the 1950s by hut owner and village resident, the late Bob Garnham. Joe Clark suggests that it is a term used by the Army when the Arab soldiers had separate quarters to the white soldiers.

Ann Thubron, in her account based on her personal experience, 'A Childhood in the Arab Quarter 1946 – 1962', suggests that the term originated because the families who occupied the huts 'Were tanned from the sun and Deben mud and lived in the shacks and tents - so the name stuck'.

Ann's recollections resonate for many of us who have experienced similar home grown weekend and holiday pleasures as children, parents and grandparents, making the most of rudimentary accommodation.



The Future

So far, despite gradual changes and modifications to the huts themselves, combined with the impact of increasing numbers of day visitors and sailors, this lovely riverside setting, with its quiet beauty and natural amenity, has somehow survived. Let's hope, that whilst we are experiencing an unprecedented demand for properties with 'river and sea views' that the planning authorities will work in partnership with the Waldringfield Hut Owners Ltd, and the local community to resist unnecessary development in this AONB.

With thanks to:

Joe and Kit Clark, Roger Stollery, Mike and Rani Pert, Ann Thubron, Bob Crawley, Mike Nunn, Stan Baston, Liz Kennedy and Alyson Videlo of the Waldringfield History Group.

If you are or have been an owner of Waldringfield Huts or have memories and information to share as a visitor please contact the Editor for publication in future editions of the RDA magazine as well as to inform the Waldringfield History Group's research.



Stan Baston

Early days of photography - Thomas Naunton Waller

So when did photography start for you? Your first Kodak Brownie, a Praktika SLR or just with your Smart Phone?

Back in the 1890s, a son of Suffolk invented his own camera and was actively shooting in and around the River Deben.

Thomas Naunton Waller was born in Waldringfield in 1863. Unlike many of the Waller family, he did not enter the Church, but chose to be a Premium Apprentice Engineer, for which you had to pay, at the ship builder Hawthorn Leslie in Newcastle. He eventually returned to Suffolk and Waldringfield in the 1920s, naming his house *Nova Castra*.



My story started in 2007, when Waldringfield resident Joe Clark, mentioned that he had a large box of glass plates, inherited by his wife Kit (nee Waller), and they had not been able to scan them - could I help? After a period of trial and error I



was able to place the plates on a light box and photograph them with an SLR mounted on a tripod.

This gave me a negative and it was easy to convert to positive. After 100 years plus, there were plenty of imperfections which were painstakingly removed with Photoshop. What did not need altering was the composition. TNW had a really good eye and was a master of his craft

I am not the first person to process these

plates as I have noticed that some have appeared in books. My favourite is this shot of the ferry looking across to Woodbridge.

Using these plates, and from copies of other old photographs, Joe gave a well attended talk at Waldringfield Village Hall called " A Walk around Waldringfield 100 years ago". Waldringfield History Group was subsequently formed and its latest project is translating the medieval Court Rolls which reveal the state of Lords and Serfs in the village. Now that is another interesting story. The original camera is now in the Woodbridge Museum and the glass plates were handed over to Suffolk Records Office.



.....

Waldringfield Mystery No. 3 Beach Hut Owners

Who are these three people peeking over the wall? They are supposedly owners of the beach hut at the top of the steps during the war, that was subsequently moved further downstream. They may be Army/RAF and may have come from Caterham. The man in the blazer we think is Mr Cleer Cutting.



David Bucknell

Interview with Alison Calvesbert

You talk about being brought up in Bawdsey. Can you say what your childhood in Bawdsey meant to you?

I had what I consider to be an idyllic childhood in Bawdsey. It was a time of riding a bike from dawn till dusk with the only proviso being that you were back for tea. With an older brother we would go on bike rides to the beach, both at East Lane and also the Quay, exploring the bounty that nature had to offer. We would take some food and water and be gone for the whole day – den building, beach-combing, climbing walls and trees and generally exploring the coast paths.

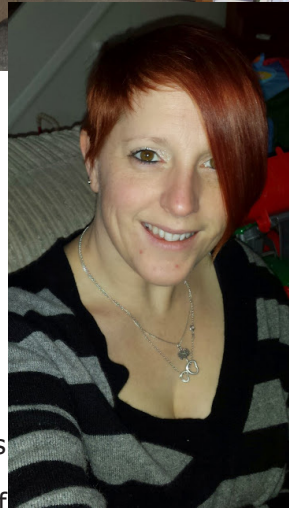
My dad was a science teacher and my mother an English teacher and therefore I was taught about nature, poetry, and was inherently taught to appreciate my surroundings – although that focus became more lost in my teenage years, where simple frustrations of living in such a cut off place rose to the surface.

I knew all the trees, the types of flowers and what the mermaids purses really were, and had a great love of nature from first hand experiences of seeing foxes, tawny owls and hedgehogs in the garden; to keeping chickens, rabbits, guinea pigs and ferrets.

My parents were both fully involved in village life and both supported my artistic leanings and allowed me to convert the outhouse into a studio the summer after returning from university. The village has always supported and celebrated in my artistic successes and many of the Bawdsey residents have one of my depictions of our familiar coast on their walls, I am proud to say.

What does the river Deben mean to you?

The Deben has always been a big part of my creative inspiration. After a good storm, wanting desperately to collect whatever the keen Easterly winds would wash up on the beach and explore the detritus of the shore line. I have always loved the texture and nature of things that have been on a journey through the



sea and back to the river. I was heavily influenced by an artist called Terry Setch, who beach-combed the junk left on the beaches on the other side of the country on the Welsh coast; and became increasingly interested in both the man-made and natural detritus. The Deben has therefore become the instigator of my imagery and the place where my love for all things found began. I was also from a very young age taught about the dangers of the mouth of the River Deben and the risk of trying to swim across to Felixstowe was brought home by the untimely death of Mr John Western who was also a well-known coastal painter. Although not trying to swim across, he all the same, came to an untimely end by the very nature of how he found his inspiration.

The River Deben also has the iconic anti-tank blocks, which my father (wrongly) called dragons' teeth; but even after I discovered they were not real dragons' teeth, I could not imagine them as anything else. These have been a sharp focus of my work, as first defenders of our coast from German tanks and now as the 'last post' for the sea as sea defences. Whether man or nature they have seen the years go by and have aged like me, and are part of what makes our coastline unique.

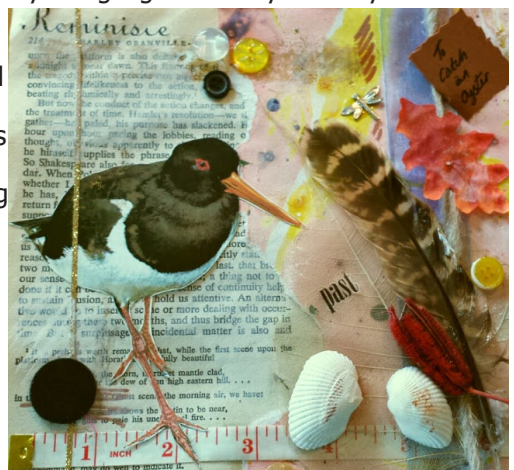


You mention 're-memory'. Can you talk a little more about this?

Re-memory was a concept that I explored through my degree printmaking specialism training. It is the process of capturing and remembering the glimpses of thoughts and memories, predominantly from childhood; but also in the teaching of my parents and through the bringing up of my own son since his birth three years ago. Finding myself being moved to tell him that it is an oak leaf he is holding, just as my father had told me. Re-memory is highlighted in my work by the passing of my father which has made me even more curious about the traditions and teachings that he passed to me and that I am now passing onto my son. This method of re-memory has resulted in a style of working that has taken the form of collage and gathering in 'memory boxes'.

You refer to your sewing machine as a 'creative outlet'. What is it about sewing?

My husband bought me a sewing machine to keep me occupied, and I suspect out of the way, when



the World Cup football was on. Previous to this I had been using my great aunt's Singer sewing machine with a turn handle and the clatter clack of the machine, and my ever growing, one armed bicep, made him feel he needed to get me an electric machine.

I have always loved fabric and incorporated fabrics of all sorts in my previous work; but creating something that can be passed on, like a baby blanket or a quilt, seemed to fit in with my thoughts of family and creating objects that could be passed on. I began my first major quilt on maternity leave and finished it on my son's second birthday! And from this point I have created animals, made blankets, bolsters for beds, run up the odd pair of curtains and created fabric bound books. In the winter months my studio is bitterly cold and the scale of my creations has to be limited to my study; and therefore the fabric and sewing machine led creations are easier to manage until the brighter, warmer months return.



Chicken

You talk about extending your printmaking skills 'to include 3D...in order to reflect my love of the sea.' Why 3D, how does it work?



Within my fine art printmaking training we were very much encouraged to explore all avenues of how to create and explore the meaning that we wanted to convey. The printmakers, fine artists, sculptors, textileists, ceramicists were all in studios in close quarters, and many of us as students worked together on a variety of projects. As a result I happened upon a technique which allowed me to print onto plaster sheets. These could be poured and set with imagery and objects embedded into any size which could then be cut and created into 3D forms.

This method of working suited my eclectic tendencies of loving all things textural, and meant I was not limited by a flat medium of print. One of my first creations was a paper pulp full size anti-tank block that I created in my studio space; in which I incorporated all sorts of debris that I found on the beach – it stank! But it was the starting point to be much more creative in the depiction of Bawdsey imagery, and culminated in my degree work comprising of two huge plaster blocks that were suspended in the space with two large digital prints on the walls. This was much more of an installation space where the viewer was forced to interact with the landscape instead of being merely a viewer - much like I feel when looking at Bawdsey and the surroundings; having a need for people to take a more active role in preserving and valuing our landscapes.

You talk about being an artist, teacher, entrepreneur,..... How does this serve to strengthen your practice?

As a teacher in a high school as well as being an artist, I find that I use my knowledge of a vast variety of expertise every single day. However, it is easy to get lost as a teacher and resign yourself to a part of facilitator and not a creative artist.

Therefore I use my teaching as a place where, I too, can find new inspirations, wherever I can source new techniques and ideas and where I can show students the next step of the path of their own creative enlightenment. I am lucky enough to still have days where I can share my work with an enthusiastic student and they too can inspire me with an artist they have seen, as well as a technique they want to use; and I can lead them through a process to create an effective outcome. I also have the opportunity to take students of all ages on trips to galleries and museums and take them to see works that I have seen hundreds of times and see them inspired for the very first time – which allows me not to become jaded and see the potential of hopefully the next great artist?



Could you describe 'your love of the sea'?

I have been very privileged to live in Bawdsey for the whole of my life and with my mother still residing in the village I have been part of the village and village life as well as having places to escape on my doorstep. No matter what your worries or cares, you can stand at East Lane on a rain savaged night and scream your worries into the wind – no one will hear and no one will tell. Equally, on a blistering summers day you can lose yourself in the children's laughter with sand of the Quay between your toes, and eat ice-cream with the best of them!

The treasures that the sea has offered up are etched like my printmaking technique into my heart – like the day I found a very small, very shrivelled sea horse on the beach with my father, which he encapsulated in resin for me. This began my beach-coming in earnest and set the path for my finding all things beautifully changed by the sea and using these as a basis for my art.

www.alisoncalvesbert.co.uk

Martello



Azure Martello

Living on the River

Jane Bradburn talked to Chris, Gill, Anne and Tony on a bright winter's afternoon aboard Anne's boat *Tulip* at Granary Yacht Harbour about what it is like to live on the river Deben.

How did you come to live on a boat?

Gill: We had difficulty paying the mortgage on our cottage in Witnesham and didn't like any of the alternatives. In 1985 we bought the houseboat – it was just a hull, full of rubbish, but we took a leap of faith.

Chris: I started life sailing on the Thames and was in the Royal Navy so I've been on water all my life. I used to spend my holidays here and row past these boats and always said I'd love to live on one.

Tony: I spent a lot of time travelling and you get into a particular kind of 'head space'; not working and relaxing. I wanted that kind of life in England. Living on a boat was a way of doing that. It's like living on the fringes of society.

Anne: I sold a house in Yorkshire and bought the boat. I'd always liked boats and the water.

What sort of boats do you live on?

Gill: I live on a former RAF air sea rescue boat which was built in 1943 to rescue pilots when they ditched in the sea. She'd been used in the waters off Scotland and Ireland but was decommissioned in 1945. These boats were only built to last a few years but she's still going strong.



Tony: Mine was built in 1960 as an open boat but she's changed over the course her life. Someone put on a cabin and roof and I added the galley and covered stern area.

Chris: My boat was one of the last wooden Otter class boats built in 1968. Her claim to fame is that she was owned by Ian Anderson, flautist with Jethro Tull.

Anne: I think my boat was used to carry cheeses in the Dutch canals.

What is so special about the way of life?

Tony: The stress of life is less because the cost of living is less and it's much more relaxed. You live at a different pace of life. It's like it used to be years ago. When I visit my friends in London they are so stressed out.

Gill: It's very relaxed. You're almost horizontal.

Chris: When I moved here my blood pressure dropped about 30 points in about two weeks.

Tony: That's because you keep watering it down with alcohol!

Chris: You take much more notice of nature - you're so much closer to it. I'm living my lifetime's dream. It is a beautiful place; you'd pay a million dollars for the view.

Gill: Yes, you feel connected with nature. You get a feeling for the water and for the rhythm of life through the changing tides. I can spend ages having my tea and watching the birds and the different seasons.

Tony: Sometimes it can take your breath away, even when the tide is out - the moon comes up and is reflected in the mud and you think - how marvellous!

Chris: It's dramatically different when compared with city life. It struck me as soon as I arrived - the strength of the community here - it's quite delightful. The community is the special thing about living on boats.

Tony: You hear of old people dying alone and not being found for months, that wouldn't happen round here. We support each other, but don't live in each other's pockets.

Is there anything you miss about living in a house?

Gill: A garden but I do the garden for three elderly clients and grow plants on the bank beside the boat.

Chris: I'm glad to have got rid of my garden it was so big.

Tony: You have to pare yourself down in terms of possession but it brings home how little you need to live quite comfortably. It's like decluttering your mind.

Chris: I agree. It's great getting rid of stuff - so cleansing.

Anne: I don't think I could live in a house again.

It sounds perfect. Does anything every go wrong?

Tony: I fell in the mud head first. I had a rucksack on my back and a computer bag in my hand and I slipped on a pitch black winter's evening. I was covered in mud. I stripped off outside the boat and tried to use the tap but it was frozen.

Gill: My dog fell in - the look of indignation on its face as it slid over the side! The cat fell in too, when the dog chased it, and had to swim to shore. Two days later she upped sticks and went to live very happily at Springside Stores.

I had rats last July; they came up the stern where my electric cables come through. I could hear scrabbling in the kitchen and walked in quietly to see the rat jumping off the kitchen unit and heading for the bedroom. One night I was reading in bed and rolled over to look at the clock, and a rat was sitting on my paperback. It took a week to get rid of it.

Do you think people have a mistaken idea of what it is like to live on a boat?

Gill: Some people get romantic ideas about living in boats and then they find it



difficult or don't like it.

Tony: I think they expect it to be a house on water and it's not, it's a very different space. It can be harsh in winter – you experience the elements in a way in which most people don't when they go from a centrally heated house to a car and then warm office. Most people don't really get to grips with cold; they are too protected from the weather.

Anne: People tell me I'm brave to live on a boat; but it's very cosy. They don't expect me to have a log burner, shower, washing machine and television

Chris: Both my daughters worried about me going to live on a boat. When they came to see it they said "Oh you've got an oven and a galley – you can cook!" They went away with peace of mind.

Gill: I think people got the wrong idea about people on boats in the 80s because travellers came and lived on wrecked boats and left them to rot. The Council introduced all sorts of rules. We formed the Deben Houseboats Association and hired a lawyer. It was a difficult time because we didn't know if we could stay.

Tony: The yard owner can get rid of you or double your rent – there's no contract. Their attitude is important. There's no security of tenure but we're lucky that Skeets are such a lovely family and very supportive.

Anne: You just have to keep your nose clean and pay your mooring fees.

What else has happened in the past?

Gill: The hurricane in October 1987. We were woken by the screeching of the wind and watched as boats broke their moorings. They all piled into us and we got pushed up the bank. We ended up at a ridiculous angle and we couldn't go to bed because we just fell out. In daylight we saw that all the boats were dotted about, trees upturned – nothing was in the right position anymore. It was really really scary.

The next year we had a hailstorm - it sounded like gunfire. The hail stones were two inches across and dented my car – it looked like beaten copper. Of course we've had times in the past when the river has frozen over for several days, you hear the sound of it cracking as it breaks up.



Tony: Recently there was the tidal surge – we just rose up and the water came to the level of the footpath. If Woodbridge floods in the future we're in the right place, we'll probably have to go and rescue people.

And finally....

Anne: We haven't said anything bad about living on the river have we?

Tony: That's why we're so happy.



'Houseboats and Oyster Catchers'

With thanks to Michael Coulter for giving the RDA permission to print his picture.

WWW.Coultercards.co.uk

EDITORS NOTE: We would like to compile an audio archive of recordings of your memories and experiences of the River Deben. If you would like to take part please contact David Bucknell or Jane Bradburn

***Nirvana* - back to the Baltic**

Once tasted, the delights of our East Coast Rivers are addictive. They have inspired music, poetry and art for generations. Ramblers, nature-lovers and yachtsmen alike have succumbed to their charms. For me, as one of their number, the Deben River has always headed the list as the most attractive of these.

The Sirens of Greek myths have their counterparts in Nordic mythology and their allure is no less strong. So when the habitual itch to sail further afield in our yawl *Nirvana* could no longer be resisted, (this happens every five years or so), the Northern Sirens had their way and we began to plan our trip to Denmark and Roskilde, the ancient Viking capital in particular.

Why Roskilde? The Scandinavians have an impressive understanding of wooden boat-building and a great respect for its history. Furthermore, the city of Roskilde would soon be confirming its links with Woodbridge, which have been forged progressively over the past several years. The link, as

most will know, is long-ships: our Sutton Hoo burial ship of circa 620 AD and their 14 excavated Viking ships. Their world-leading knowledge of ancient ship reconstruction will play an essential role in the proposed full-size reconstruction of the Sutton Hoo ship, at the former Whisstocks boatyard site in Woodbridge.

In 2015 this was to be *Nirvana's* fourth expedition to the Baltic. At 90 years old and now 25 years in our ownership, it seemed fitting to celebrate in an appropriate way. The old lady is in very good condition and continual maintenance and professional work, when and where necessary, keeps her equal to such North Sea passages.

A 'shake-down' sail from the Deben to Harwich is usually profitable; firstly there are always a few jobs that show up and adjustments to make; then there's water and diesel to take on board and victualing; and lastly Harwich is a much easier place to start from compared with the awkward



Deben entrance.

With the comforting assurance of three crew members who were familiar with the boat, we left the Suffolk Yacht Harbour in higher spirits than the weather forecast actually warranted. Masfield's euphemistic sentiment: "and all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by" has a hollow ring to it as one plunges out past Harwich clinging to one's lunch, one's courage and one's sense of humour.

Our trusty bosun, Hugh, was trying to pick out the figure of his wife Marion who had driven to Felixtowe to wave us off. The cry went up: "there she is, on the beach, wearing a yellow scarf!" There was frantic waving as if we were bound on a world circumnavigation and she wouldn't see her beloved for several years- if ever. Salt water and wind always induce drama and exaggeration!

I have yet to meet anyone who actually enjoys a North Sea crossing. Sleep, comfort and hot food are usually in short supply. The course from Harwich to our intended landfall of Ijmuiden in Holland is a little North of East; so the 'prevailing' southwesterly that one might expect would have been ideal. Not a chance, as it turned out, in mid June 2015.

Thus it was that *Nirvana* found herself fighting her way against an ever more boisterous North East wind to South Holland, the Roompot. This is a large picturesque holiday area with many possibilities for local Dutch families. For visiting

yachtsmen it's both an unexpectedly quiet haven from the rigours of the North Sea and a welcome reward for their labours. It was a relief to lock through into her relative shelter! One of our crew, the ever reliable Lou, left us then - so then we were three.

From there we proceeded under sail in the open and once tidal waters of 'protected' Holland and later, under power, through the maze of Dutch canals at the speed of a fast jog and with plenty of time to take in all the sights and endless locks and bridges. With a fixed 40' mast, route planning is essential. There is a lengthy circuitous route around Amsterdam which costs an extra day. The alternative is an organised late-night convoy which you can join, but a night passage usually takes a day for recovery.

North of Amsterdam the country becomes progressively prettier as one gets into Friesland where the cows are black and white, the horses tall, sleek and handsome and the people speak a strange dialect. This is a part of the country I particularly enjoy- neat little farms, and beautiful flat landscape. It also boasts the largest chain of connected inland lakes in Europe. We always prefer sail-power to diesel-power and there are plenty of opportunities for this here. Sailing the offshore route, whether through the Friesian Islands or round the outside, would at this stage have taken too much time - much as I love those islands and their fiendish tides.

North Holland is bordered by the river Ems and threatened, as always, by the North Sea. We had a meal in a newish, elevated restaurant in Delzijl

overlooking the harbour. Only two years previously this restaurant, despite its elevation, had been knee-deep in water. Plans to raise the sea wall by a further two metres simply continue the endless history of Holland's battle against the North Sea. At this point, we left the boat at the Abel Tasman yacht harbour, a very inexpensive and friendly co-operative, and all headed home.

With a new crew - a day's sail from Delfzijl out to sea down the Ems river, brought us round the German island of Borkum and to the German Frisian island of Norderney. It is possible to cut south of Borkum 'inland' across the sands to reach Norderney. Local knowledge talked of the "touch and go" method to cross the shallows on a rising tide to reach the channels leading to Norderney. The Thames barge skippers of our East coast used this practice of "touch and go" in order to reach inland destinations or cross sand bars as early as possible on the tide- bumping forward over the sand or mud as the flood tide allowed. Twice we've sailed down the Ems past the turning point for this route and twice I've 'bottled out'. The 'bumping' idea (across the sandbanks) didn't appeal and the area also holds the vivid memory of one of Erskine Childers' most exciting chapters in the *Riddle of the Sands* - the dinghy trip in fog from Norderney to Memmert. It's just too famous a place to risk making a fool of one's self!

Norderney is a traditional German holiday island full of bustle and jollity and a good stopping place before facing the terrors of the Elbe - the Hamburg river. Here we rented

bikes and joined the ice-cream-eating *melée*. Coffee tastes so much better ashore, abroad and with nothing to do but wait for the right weather!

With a fair wind and tide from the entrance of the Elbe up to Cuxhaven it can be a pleasant sail. However, there are plenty of stories to encourage caution and wise seamanship - not least another chapter in the *Riddle of the Sands* where Davies nearly loses his beloved *Dulcibella* behind the Scharhorn, a treacherous spit of sand protruding from the south side of the Elbe entrance.

If one is late, even with a favorable wind, and misses the east-flowing flood tide, a normally favourable following wind will simply serve to kick up an horrendous sea against the opposing ebb tide; all but the reckless or foolish would do well to wait the six hours or so for the turn of the tide in their favour. Whilst this might seem a miserable solution in such an exposed place, it would certainly be the lesser of two evils.

Nowadays, with the ubiquitous electronic navigation systems, Elbe No.1, the first of the entrance buoys, is marked merely by a relatively insignificant looking red buoy. In earlier times there was a fine red light ship, reassuringly large and with a huge light on top. (I'll refer to this later) There is little sense of achievement or welcome on reaching Elbe No.1 as there is almost no evidence of land anywhere except on the clearest of days. No Bawdsey Manor or Felixtowe Ferry on this river!

After a brief pause in Cuxhaven we pressed on to Brunsbüttel - at the

entrance to the South end of the Kiel Canal, Der Kaiser Wilhelm Kanal. This fine canal dug before the First World War was not built for benign or commercial reasons but rather for military purposes and was of immense strategic importance to both the Kaiser and the Fürher. Today it carries all manner of craft from small yachts to enormous cruise liners, shortening the journey round the north of Jutland by hundreds of miles. There is little to impede the small yacht in this canal. Traffic signals control the tighter bends to allow the big vessels



to pass one another safely, however, the small yacht needs only keep in the shallow water near the bank to remain completely safe.

The canal banks are themselves very pretty and abound in dog-walkers cyclists and fishermen. At many intervals small ferries carry cars and foot-passengers to and fro and always seemed to avoid us.

Some hours into our all day trip north up the Canal we met the Elbe 1 lightship, referred to earlier, beautifully restored steaming south, and a little later Elbe 3, likewise, clearly the pride and joy of their respective restoration teams.

A delightful evening in the ancient town of Rendsburg enjoying the benefits of a strong £/Euro exchange rate rewarded us with a fine North German meal of local fish and other delicacies.

Because Rendsburg is close to the Kiel Canal, the railway has to follow a huge loop to gain enough height to cross the canal. Suspended from cables under the bridge at ground level is a transporter bridge which carries road traffic and foot passengers. This magnificent 1913 iron structure is now under threat – being deemed inadequate for the new Danish and Swedish trains crossing it. The Rendsburgers are very proud of this engineering marvel and there is understandably strong opposition to modernizing or replacing it. (Google *The Bridge-Hunter's Chronicles* for more information). Leaving the boat in Rendsburg we took this exciting train ride on our trip home to England.

Again with a new crew, my good friend Ian, the two of us set out north to complete the trip to Holenau where the Kiel Canal terminates with huge locks, which open (for a small fee) into the Kiel bay and the Baltic, or Nord-Ostsee as the Germans call it.

With very much lower concentration of salt, and no tides to leave mud deposits and weed round its edges, it feels and smells quite different from our East Coast rivers and North Sea. First impressions would suggest a safer and less threatening environment but experience and history tell quite otherwise!

The passage from here northwards up the East coast of Jutland is delightful,

past the town of Sønderborg at the bottom of the "Little Belt" and the border between Germany and Denmark prior to the famous 1864 battle of Dybbøl. The history is complex but the border between Germany and Denmark has risen and fallen like a yo-yo being at one time as far south as Altona on the the Elbe. After the annexation of Schleswig Holstein the Prussians successfully invaded Denmark in 1864 and formed the border which lasted until 1922.



Intriguing tricycle at Vejle

Further north in the Little Belt we passed the C4th Nydam ship reconstruction lying by a jetty - black, elegant, and much loved by her 30 volunteer boat builders. I had been over to see her in the winter with the Riverside Trust but it was the first time I had seen her afloat. She is of very sophisticated construction and the original, re-assembled in the Schleswig Museum, pre-dates the Sutton Hoo ship by some three hundred years. One is not used to thinking of Viking artefacts pre-dating Anglo-Saxon ones but they did.

At the head of the beautiful Vejle Fjord, we exchanged Ian for my wife Nancy; who passed one another unseen at Billund airport in the care of Ryanair.

Retracing our steps down the Vejle Fjord in glorious weather, Nancy and I headed eastwards to the top of Zeeland - the Copenhagen Island- and the Roskilde Fjord.

This has a very winding and complicated channel with several dangerous narrows before one reaches the old Viking capital of Roskilde - a fearsome trip for the sailor without GPS but a great historic protection for the city.

All the way southwards there are high points where warning beacons could have been lit telling of impending attack. Then at Skudelev there comes a particularly difficult part of the fjord. In early times there were three navigable channels here. Of the two easier ones, one was barricaded, and the other blocked with scuttled ships. (five of these now grace the halls of the museum). Northern invaders desperately trying to negotiate the third channel could be picked off easily by the defending Danish Vikings.

The Viking Museum in Roskilde owes its existence to the five C11th ships raised from the Skudelev narrows. Ironically, a further nine were discovered as they dug the harbour and foundations for the Museum itself!



Once again moored in the harbour, *Nirvana's* presence attracted many friends from five years previous as she lay alongside the quay in this rich atmospheric setting. The sounds of

side axes chipping away at oak planks, the tap tapping from the smith's forge as he fashioned iron rivets for the various reconstruction projects, and the pungent smell of tar wafting across from the rope-maker's workshop are irresistible to archaeologist, historian, shipwright, artist and poet alike - true *serendipity* - because always unexpectedly delightful.

'Boats of the Deben'

***Maid Marion* PZ 61**

Maid Marion was built in 1925 at Port Mellon Cornwall. She was originally named *Westward*. Her builder was a young shipwright called Percy Mitchell who wrote a book called a Boat Builders Story. In the book there is a picture of *Maid Marion* being built. She was the first large lugger (fishing boat) he built. He agreed to build her for two brothers who fished out of Mevagissey. He agreed to build her for £300 but he built her so strongly that the eventual cost was £400 and he nearly went out of business. He had to sack all his men. His reputation as a good boat builder grew and he eventually took his men on again and built some very fine boats up until he retired in the 1970s. His son told us however he never built one as strong as *Maid Marion* again.

She fished out of Mevagissey for four years and her fishing registration was FY 229 (Fowey). In 1930 she was sold to Mr John Orchard of Porthleven whose wife had just given birth to a daughter called Marion so he changed the boat's name to *Maid Marion*. The

registration was changed to PZ 61 (Penzance) the nearest large fishing port.

It is very unusual for the Cornish to change the name of a boat because they consider it very bad luck for the boat. However, she proved to be a lucky boat. In June 1940, when she crossed from Devonport Docks to Leharve France, in company with fifty other boats to help rescue 3,000



soldiers who were cut off there, she returned safely to Devonport loaded with soldiers. (This was Operation Aerial). Operation Dynamo from Dunkirk finished the week before.

John Orchard fished with *Maid Marion* out of Newlyn and Porthleven, mainly for mackerel and pilchards, until he retired in 1963. He then sold *Maid Marion* to Mr. Jack Siley, the Chairman of Falmouth Docks, who converted her to a fishing boat / yacht conversion which she still is today. Jack Siley owned a farm near Bishop's Stortford which was managed by Essex farmer Mr. John Hunt.

In 1964 Jack Siley sold *Maid Marion*

to John Hunt (my late father) who sailed her to the River Deben in 1965 where she has been based ever since. The only time she has been back to Cornwall was in 2003 when we took her to Looe for the Cornish Lugger reunion. There we met an elderly fisherman called Alfred Roberts who, as a boy, had his first three years fishing on her. In the summer months we take *Maid Marion* on trips up and down the East Anglian coast and visit most of the east coast ports.

We sometimes take her to Holland and Belgium on our longer trips. In 2012 she took part in the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Pageant from Putney down to the West India Dock, passing and saluting the Queen and Prince Philip on the Royal Barge just below Tower Bridge. A picture of her was shown in the 'Hello' magazine. Her picture appears quite often in many boating magazines and she was on the front cover of Foxes boatyard magazine called *Foxtails*. The family have now owned her for fifty-two years. And she is in very good order for a boat 92 years old. She is certainly a great credit to the man who built her.

Peter Hunt

Editor's Note: Made Marion is taken out of the water each winter at Foxes, and transported on a 'low loader', by Peter to his farm in Braintree for 'rest and recuperation'.

Waldingfield Mysteries

No. 4 Kingfisher Creek Cuttings

The origin of these cuttings in the salt - marsh was discussed at an RDA talk in 2013 and the History Group has often wondered about them. We once thought that they were connected with the WW2 landing craft activity but a quick comparison



of dimensions ruled this out.

The late Andrew Haig used to refer to the area as Kingfisher Creek and *Kingfisher* was the barge used for mud digging in the Cement Years; so we assumed that the cuttings were named after it and therefore related to the Cement Works. However, neither the shape of the cuttings nor the dates support this view

Similar cuttings have not been found yet on the Deben or elsewhere. If they were cement related we would expect to find something similar on the Medway. There are some patterned oyster bed cuttings on the west side of West Mersea but not like these.

Other cuttings, supposedly related to the brickworks are on the Crouch at Bridgemarsh Island; they have a slight similarity.

A review of maps shows that they were not described in 1904, by which time the Cement Works was almost closing down. They were there in 1926 so pre-date the Second World War but not the First.

Remaining options to consider:

- Could have been cut for berthing boats but what use in a tideway?
- Could have been diggings for material for sea wall repairs.
- Shellfish beds.

Something blindingly obvious that we have missed!

Bob Crawley

Waldingfield History Society



River Deben Association

Annual General Meeting

Thursday 28 April 2016

7.30pm

Woodbridge Community Hall

The AGM will be followed by a talk

‘Natural England’s Role for the River Deben’

by

Emma Hay

Emma was brought up in Essex and has been the Natural England Conservation Adviser for the River Deben Estuary for the last ten years. Before that she worked for the Scottish Natural Heritage for ten years.