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## Chairman's Comment

Since our last Newsletter, we have had a most successful AGM on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Over 150 members attended in spite of a date change due to the intrusion of the General Election. There was an interesting talk by John Le Mare on the History of Suffolk including our area.

The interest and support members showed in the various issues the Association has taken up was most heartening. In particular, considerable help was received in preparing a statement to take to the Planning Inquiry into the change of use at Sluice Farm, Martlesham from a Piggery to a site for Industrial Units. I would like to thank members who wrote individual letters to the Department of the Environment, which I am sure led to the successful outcome.

Members usual generosity in adding to the Felixstowe Ferry Foreshore Trust Fund was gratefully received. The foreshore is now purchased and public access to the River Deben at Felixstowe assured. Thanks should go to Ian Battye for his hard work on the Association's behalf. His position on the Foreshore Trust's Committee will, I feel, be of benefit to both Associations. We are still some way from paying back the loan for our share in the Trust and any additional fund-raising would be greatly appreciated.

Liaison with the Alde and Ore Association is most fruitful and at their instigation we are taking up the issue of water extraction with the NRA, particularly in relation to the upper reaches of the River Deben. Approaching major issues together gives greater weight to our points of view and we are grateful for their continuing contact. Their Bar-B-Q was attended by some of our members.

In July, some members of the Committee attended a Conference run by the Heritage

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Coast Forum at Felixstowe Ferry Sailing Club. The subject was 'Managing watersports at the Coast' with a special emphasis on Jet-Skiing. [See Report]

During Woodbridge Festival an exhibition on the River Deben was put together by Robert Simper and Lil Tudor-Craig. It was staged in the Shire Hall through the good auspices of Russell Geen and Woodbridge Town Council. Approximately 200 visitors and a few members of the RDA attended the exhibition of photographs, sketches and attractive cards designed by Kate Green. David and Kate Green and some Committee members put in many hours manning the Shire Hall for which we are most grateful. The exhibition appeared to be well received in spite of the unavoidable lack of publicity and it is hoped there may be an opportunity to have a similar exhibition in the Tide Mill.

### **Committee News**

Brian Scott has regretfully felt he should resign from the Committee due to other pressing commitments. It is hoped he may do some writing for a possible new leaflet. Many thanks to him for the work he did on our present leaflet and on the constitution. Mike Atkins is now undertaking the task of refining the constitution even further. Steven James, representing the Water-ski Club is warmly welcomed onto the Committee.

Amongst more mundane topics, the Committee have keenly debated several projects. Particularly controversial has been the pros and cons of producing a new more comprehensive leaflet, possibly partly financed by Suffolk County Council. This leaflet could contain possible circular walks to and from the Deben, conservation hints, possible guidelines for sailors, local information or a mixture of any of these. There are compelling arguments for and against bringing the River Deben and area into greater prominence and a decision was made to produce a draft leaflet for discussion only in the first instance. We

have to tread carefully between the benefits of making people aware of the special qualities of the river and the real fear of exploitation for its tourist potential, which may be of only marginal benefit to those who use the river and live in the area.

We are working on a Strategy for the Association which we hope will represent views on how the Association should proceed and include a closer examination of its aims. This will be our own home-grown policy statement and not a small research project on some-one else's Agenda. We hope to bring out a draft next Spring.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee not just for attending Meetings, but researching items, day to day running of the Association, manning exhibitions and stalls, fund-raising and all the other tasks they undertake. It is hard work, but most worth-while and I hope occasionally enjoyable! Do look at the Vacancies column and if you feel a position would interest you, please contact any Committee member.

In the last couple of years, there has continued to be a proliferation of environmental agencies, often with annual changes of names and some with overlapping aims. They and the two Local Councils produce policies for the area with benefits that official recognition brings. The value of our Association, which is both representative and local, cannot be overstated. We actually do clear litter, write letters, give evidence at Planning Inquiries and generally watch out for the River. This is real 'appreciation' of the River Deben and surrounding area - not just talking heads. So please continue to write in, ring in and air your views. This keeps the Association active and informed.

I look forward to seeing you on 16<sup>th</sup> October at our next Open Meeting.

Anni Healey  
Chairman

## **RDA Business**

### **Membership**

Currently there are 165 Single members and 295 Couples making a total membership of 755 together with 7 clubs.

Stephen Ashworth  
Membership Secretary

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### **Treasurer's Report**

At the time of writing (31 July 92) the three funds stand as follows:

General Fund	£817
Felixstowe Ferry Foreshore Fund	-£279*
Projects Fund	£1,935
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>£2,473</b>

\* NOTE. This sum is a deficit. It has been covered by a loan of £300 from the General Fund, but we should try to raise this £279 to clear the remaining debt associated with the purchase of Felixstowe Ferry Foreshore.

The Projects Fund could be used to fund the remainder of the Foreshore purchase, but as it was set-up using the money from the Deben Oyster Protest Committee after the Foreshore purchase, it would be better not to. The Projects Fund will be used in the future to fund worthwhile projects, perhaps in conjunction with other organisations, to the benefit of the river and its immediate environment.

We have gratefully received £30.99 from a fund which was set-up for a river area concern. This fund had become dormant and it was felt by the signatories that the balance would be best transferred to our projects fund.

I should like to thank those who made donations to the Felixstowe Ferry Foreshore Fund at the AGM and by post. In particular,

I would like to thank the person who recently made an anonymous donation of £50.00.

I continue to be particularly grateful to those who pay their subscriptions by Bankers Order and also to those others who renewed at the first reminder!

I should also like to thank those who have delivered Newsletters by hand, thereby saving a great deal of postage. Michael Atkins has now taken on the organisation of these deliveries - I am most grateful to him too!

Terence Kermode  
Treasurer

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### **Forthcoming Events**

16 October

River Deben Association Open Meeting, Woodbridge Community Hall. 7:30pm Start

Speaker: Caroline or David Cowper (Caroline would speak on the subject of Arctic Magic. David would speak on his trip through the North West Passage in a converted Life Boat.)

18 October

Litter Clearance  
(See Article on page 5 for details)

6 November

Sausage and Mash evening at Woodbridge Cruising Club  
Tickets will be available from Richard Hare and Anne Moore on and after the Open Meeting.  
7:30pm Start

## **Who's Who**

### **Officers**

Chairman	Anni Healey. Jesters, 7A Burkitt Rd, Woodbridge.	☎ 0394 382291
Vice Chairman	Anthony Mason. 29 Ipswich Rd, Woodbridge.	☎ 0394 386601
Secretary	Anne Moore. 2 Grundisburgh Rd, Woodbridge.	☎ 0394 383559
Treasurer	Terence Kermode, 8 Carmelite Place, Woodbridge.	☎ 0394 386613
Membership	Stephen Ashworth, Little Mead, Fayrefield Rd, Melton.	☎ 0394 386301
Minutes Sec.	Annette Burt. 21 Kingston Rd, Woodbridge.	☎ 0394 385535

### **Committee Members**

Felixstowe Ferry	David White. 6 Coniston Close, Felixstowe.	☎ 0394 283972
History/Farming	Robert Simper. Sluice Cottage, Ramsholt.	☎ 0394 411273
Business	Moray Macphail, Woodbridge Boat Store	☎ 0394 380390
Houseboats	Lil Tudor-Craig. ML2605, Wilford Bridge Rd, Melton.	☎ 0394 386011
Wildfowlers	Adrian Judge. 29 Bredfield St, Wdge. IP12 4NH	☎ 0394 383350
Melton	Rosemary Schlee. Deben Lodge, Melton Rd, Wdge.	☎ 0394 382740
Watersports	Tim Midwinter. 37 Coopers Rd, Martlesham Heath.	☎ 0473 623020
Waldringfield	Mike Atkins. Rudd's Barn, Waldringfield Rd, M'sham	☎ 0473 36668
SCDC Liaison	Russell Geen. 41 Hasketon Rd, Wdge. IP12 4LE	☎ 0394 383696
Water-Ski Club	Steve James, 28 Burnham Close, Ipswich.	☎ 0473 721853
General Liaison	Ian Battye. Ferry House, Quayside, Woodbridge.	☎ 0394 382338
Litter Clearance	Richard Hare. The Boat Inn, Quayside, Woodbridge.	☎ 0394 382270

Vacancies - Secretary, Fundraiser

## **1992 River Cleanup**

The River Deben Association's annual river litter clean-up scheduled for October 18, is on course and according to RDA project co-ordinator Richard Hare, should be the biggest yet.

Last year the association organised two rubbish collection events to break the back of the immense amount of litter that had accumulated over many years beforehand. Following their success it is now only expected to be necessary to mount the event annually.

"Part of the thinking behind this is that the event itself generates an increased awareness of how we can all help by not littering in the first place" said Richard,. "Even today, with all the national publicity on good environmental housekeeping there are twits around who continue to perceive littering as being macho."

But through education, this attitude is changing and by involving as many people as possible in this important event in the RDA's annual calendar, the river is already a great deal better for it.

"Even at this early stage it seems likely that all stretches of the river will be covered for

the first time by interested parties - boat clubs, wildfowlers, scouts, town societies, groups of non-affiliated individuals" said Richard.

Anyone interested in coming out to help on the day will be made most welcome and if they contact Richard Hare (☎ 0394 382270) they will be allocated to an appropriate organiser.

Last October's cleanup day was a beautiful warm autumnal day and people of all ages and interests turned out. Anyone who witnessed the state of the river a few years ago will know how much of an impact this effort has already made.

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## **Wanted - One Secretary**

Anne Moore, the existing secretary of the RDA, will be retiring in April 1993 and a replacement is needed. The secretary is responsible for arranging meetings and typing a few letters a month. The secretary does not have to take minutes of the meetings as there is a Minuting Secretary to perform this function.

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## **Reports**

### **Heritage Coast Forum**

A Meeting of the Heritage Trust Forum (South East) was held at Felixstowe Ferry Sailing Club on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1992. It was jointly organised by the Heritage Coast Forum (Manchester Polytechnic) and Suffolk Heritage Coast Project (Suffolk County Council). Several of our Committee attended.

### **Managing watersports at the coast**

The morning consisted of talks from local government agencies, conservation bodies

(Suffolk Wildlife Trust and National Trust) and user groups including the Royal Yacht Association and British Water-Ski Federation.

A Jet-Skiing demonstration was held outside the Club. It was evident from this and the visual presentation what fun the sport can provide. The problems of mixing Jet-Skiing with other water activities, especially swimming and sailing in restricted areas was discussed. Certainly a designated area and formation of clubs, to take responsibility for the sport was felt to be a way forward.

The driving rain continued for the boat trip in the afternoon and the Deben was glimpsed intermittently from the steamy windows of the JEHAN. However, a good lunch was had by all and a circular discussion wandered around some diverse points of view.

### **Issues**

**Registration of yachts and charging for use of the water.** This produced some strongly expressed points of view. Some people felt that this hit at an Englishman's right to launch a boat, theoretically anywhere.

Others felt that with the tremendous growth in watersports, charging would be a positive move to control river usage while providing income.

**Influence of amenity groups.** Problems of the ability of amenity groups to influence the

attitudes of different river users, often with conflicting traditions, was discussed. Unless groups work together, in the long-term they could be picked off one by one and control of river use could be imposed from outside.

There was criticism that some important topics were not discussed, such as:-

- Is there a saturation point for use of the Deben?
- Should the Deben be opened up more for its tourist potential?
- There was also a lack of feedback from the Heritage Coast Forum.

These points have been sent, on behalf of the RDA, to Manchester Polytechnic. Overall good contacts were made and it will give our Association something to chew over during the winter.

Anni Healey

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## **Planning Update**

Planning queries are constantly being looked into. The three main applications the RDA has been concerned with during the last six months are:

### **Sluice Farm, Martlesham**

The planning inquiry into the Johnson Brothers appeal against Suffolk Coastal District Councils refusal to grant planning permission for the conversion of farm buildings at Sluice Farm Martlesham, into Industrial Units was held in June.

There were representations from Suffolk Preservation Society, Woodbridge Society, River Deben Association, Ramblers Association and Dukes Park Residents Group. The inquiry largely centred around interpretation of Local Plan policies 202, 203 and 64. Mr Archer and Mr Chamberlain, representing SCDC, argued persuasively for their interpretation of these policies against strong questioning from the opposing Counsel. Their unflappability and professional presentation was most impressive. A large amount of work went

into the representations by the various amenity groups, but we were given a fair hearing and some awkward cross-questioning.

In the Inspector's Report he took up our points about the affect the industrial scheme would have on further urbanising the area, particularly Sandy Lane. This would be to the detriment of Martlesham Creek and the Fynn Valley. This development would have been in contrast to the effort being made under new policy guidelines to recognise the special landscape quality of the area.

The inquiry took two days and demonstrated how the planning process works. The Inspector supported the Councils decision to refuse planning permission, so people felt that their hard work had been justified.

### **Felixstowe Golf Course Extension.**

The proposed 9 hole extension to Felixstowe Golf Course, Ferry Road was the subject of this planning application. This application was of concern to the RDA because of the intrusion into an Area of Outstanding

Natural Beauty (AONB). This is against Suffolk County Structure Policy, but the issue of appropriate alternative use for redundant farm land had to be considered .

Our letter proposed stringent conditions if planning consent was given. These included:

- A defined limit to further expansion of the golf course.
- Consultation with Suffolk Wildlife Trust over management of dykes, ponds, landscaping etc.
- Preservation of the footpath along Tomline Bank.
- A right of privacy/safety for residents to be fully considered.

These conditions and others were accepted by the planning committee with an assurance given that there would be no loss of control by the Council in granting permission for this application.

### **Melton Woods**

There is still a large amount of opposition to any more houses being built on the remaining woodland. At present SCDC are looking at ways to minimise the number of trees lost. It appears that the only way to totally preserve the woods would be to buy them back from the developer at a large cost.

Anni Healey

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### **Hemley Footpath No. 5**

Bird Watchers may be interested to learn that some thought has been given to closure and extinguishment of the footpath along the river bank between Hemley and the breach in the river wall towards Waldringfield. This wall does not seem to be used by bird watchers who tend to walk along its river side on the saltings to maintain a low profile.

In order to establish rights to this route evidence of use is needed. If you have walked the saltings side of the wall for some time (a period of several years) and wish to help please contact our secretary (Anne

Moore) who will record your name for future reference.

All we need is names - the footpath secretary of the Ramblers Association will do the rest. Twenty years use is excellent, but a fair number of years is also useful for a "common law" case.

Ramblers Association Secretary:-

Mr D Hart MBE  
133 Kirton Rd  
Trimley St Martin  
Ipswich, IP10 0QL

Anne Moore

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### **Felixstowe Ferry Foreshore Trust**

Felixstowe Ferry is a delightful and largely unspoilt fishing hamlet at the entrance of the River Deben. The hamlet has a considerable amount of character as it is still a working fishing port that has not been overly commercialised.

Last Autumn some three acres of Felixstowe Ferry Foreshore, mainly on the northern edge facing the River Deben, was being offered for sale freehold. This land was billed as being of major importance to the

area as it controls the development of the northern part of the ferry and in particular access to the river.

Because of the commercial possibilities (marinas etc.) associated with this land, there was considerable interest when it was advertised for sale. To combat this commercial exploitation, a Trust was formed with the aims of maintaining the essential character of the Felixstowe Ferry Foreshore, providing access to the river for recreation and business uses, and controlling commercial development. On 11 May 1992 the Trust successfully completed the

purchase of the land.

The Trust consists of local people and organisations who contributed to the purchase cost of the land. The members have all stated that their aim is to actively encourage all changes and developments at Felixstowe Ferry in a way which is

sympathetic to the existing character of the area.

The River Deben Association is one of thirty members of the Trust and fully supports its objectives. On behalf of the RDA I would like to express our best wishes to the Trust for the future.

Ian Battye

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## **Committee Meeting Jottings**

Nothing as exciting as the spilling of the Treasurer's beer has occurred at recent meetings. One or two new faces have appeared and we were particularly pleased to welcome Steven James from the Water Ski Club. Thanks to the District Council, a largely contented relationship exists between the ski club and the other users of the river, although Steven defended his club skilfully against a flanking attack from an ex-Chairman of the RDA about noisy water skiers. The RDA would seem to be the sensible forum for any further difficulties to be resolved. Also a welcome to Moray MacPhail who has joined us to strengthen the business interests on the committee and who is researching the objectives and aims of the Association.

We have changed the venue. The Kings Head decided to charge us for the use of the "small room" and we have moved down the road to the Seckford Arms. Here the welcome is warm, but the room is even smaller. A quiet return to the bar to refill a glass cannot be done without stepping on many feet and, as a result, the pint has to be paced to last all evening. A stranger to the last meeting would be forgiven for likening the opening to a prayer meeting. Eyes were firmly cast down and silence was maintained. This was because the chairman was looking for someone to volunteer to take the minutes. Fortunately my eyes were cast down further than most and I had not yet been given the job. When the Minutes Secretary finally appeared the unfortunate recipient of the task was delighted to be able to hand over.

Amongst items discussed recently were the Felixstowe Ferry Foreshore Trust and the Sluice Farm planning applications. In both cases the outcome has been what we wanted. We were approached by Suffolk County Council to produce a pamphlet on walks along the banks of the Deben. It was felt that such a document should not restrict itself to walks and should include plans of the river and facilities available. It soon became apparent that this was a matter of fundamental significance to the RDA. Is our role to preserve or promote? Not surprisingly a wide variety of views were expressed. It was decided, by a small majority, that a sub-committee should draft such a document and a final decision should be left until this was seen. The Open Meeting in October will give us an opportunity to hear the views of members on this vital matter.

Michael Atkins



## Articles

### **The Kyson Fairway Committee**

Since this committee has recently joined the Association, in order to strengthen both arms as it were, and since moorings are the most visible man produced objects on the river it seems apposite to write on the subject.

I started to sail on the Deben in the late sixties, before glassfibre construction brought the explosion in boat building. In the area which is now the Kyson committee's responsibility, from Methersgate to the Town Quay, there were probably not more than a couple of dozen moorings, and in the river below Troublesome literally a couple. By the mid '80s there were over 200.

An ancient right to moor in rivers, which had served the community for hundreds of years, was now clearly inadequate to cope with such an explosion of use into a finite resource. The pushing and squeezing between the champions of that old right and those who could see the resource being destroyed by its excesses is well remembered. That discussion represented the very essence of change in answer to an arising problem but the strong debate did produce something quite unusual. It produced a publicly accountable body to deal with the problem.

This, as far as I am aware, is uncommon. Fairways Committees have traditionally been seen as authoritarian cabals set up to preserve the 'rights' of yachtsmen against newcomers; a self appointed police. In the case of The Kyson Committee the thrust of action was generated by the external requirement to regulate the moorings that had proliferated through an unbridled assumption by yachtsmen of a right to lay

moorings where they fancied.

In the formation debate those opposing foresaw the authoritarian attitudes of the traditional committee being foisted onto the free rights of yachtsmen, while those proposing foresaw this unbridled excess of moorings ruining the river's use for all - which indeed it nearly did.

At this time the landlord, Her Majesty's Crown Estate, was being empowered by act of parliament to be more diligent about the revenues from that estate. I personally believe this to be right and proper - no 'service' should be absolutely free or it merely gets abused. Every piece of the UK is owned, and services provided from it, by someone, why not also the river bed? Is not the provision of a site to moor your yacht as valuable as a site on which to provide a house or public park? Also at this time the landlord intimated that should the locals fail to form a committee to take a lease of the river bed and run it, then the site would be let commercially.

So the scene was set. Michael Beeton, who was the main instigator for a committee and was its first chairman, strongly believed that, with all the heat of the debate and so many interests being involved, the proposed Committee should, uniquely, be formed from all those who had a legitimate interest in the use of the river and that also such Committee should be accountable for its actions to a public meeting once a year. I was strongly involved from the start and wholeheartedly supported this view. He and I do not believe that yachtsmen have a unique right to impair the use of a river for others.

I have few doubts that Michael's lead here

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got the committee concept accepted with less strife than might otherwise have been the case. Certainly in its early days, under his chairmanship, many bodies were represented; it is interesting to note that only those directly involved with boats remain. It is also interesting to note that the public meetings are only modestly supported and there is no contention. I like to think that both the above are because of our careful even-handed approach and stewardship. I most sincerely hope that it is not because of apathy.

A lease of the river bed, from Methersgate Quay to a point roughly halfway between the NYC and the top end of Loders Cut, was negotiated with the Crown Estate. That lease is vested in Trustees, for whom The Fairway Committee act as a management body - setting and collecting rents for sites and paying the rent to the landlord (it is not allowed to make a 'profit' above reasonable management expenses). It must also police the fairway for navigation for which it is responsible to the Department of Transport. Since it represented other bodies as well as 'boaties', and was publicly accountable too, it found itself trying to emulate the wisdom of Solomon.

Early days were very hard work indeed - all voluntary excepting only for the secretary. Gross abuse and overcrowding had to be corrected, moorings removed and moved to clear the fairway and to make the river fit for sailing again. Thames barges no longer came up to Woodbridge because the fairway was impassable. Many complained that it was not done fast enough - while those being chased to move complained of "Nazi powers of dictatorship". It was quite impossible to please anyone or so it seemed at the time - and one seemed to be losing friends fast!

In order to make all fair a comprehensive set of Rules was created to regulate the use of

leased sites. A number of these bear directly on the proper and fair use of a very scarce resource - no private individual may let or trade his site - no one shall have more than one site (many did!) - no one may have a site and not use it - no one shall have a site 'for casual use' while keeping his boat elsewhere. It took a couple of years to agree with the other Committees our most radical innovation - that no one shall have more than one mooring site on the whole river (again many did). All were aimed at the maximum use of a scarce resource shared as widely as possible. Now that the above are established principles, their equity is generally agreed.

When I took over as chairman from Michael I followed his principles strongly - indeed with a small sub-committee I drafted the Rules to embody and extend those principles. It also seemed to be sensible to take over the laying and maintaining of the navigation marks - historically done by the NYC. Although this meant the costs being borne by the mooring holders, the Committee deemed this a proper response for the rights enjoyed by their use of the river. This principle is now well established and we have been able to lay substantial marks on massive tackle which mark the fairway better than it ever has been. It is my fond hope that with the clearing and better marking of the fairway, barges will be seen in the upper reaches again.

The next step was the extension of the lease to cover the remainder of the river up to the Town Quay - at the time when the Knoll Committee was being promulgated. It was felt that a publicly accountable body was better for this and the Kyson Committee agreed to take it on as an extension to its activities. I was very bucked when those who had free mooring for so long were so reasonable about moving and co-operating with the very considerable changes this entailed. The NYC took on clearing up many

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years of rather indiscriminate mooring by relocating virtually all their sites in neat tidy lines.

In order to do this properly the Kyson Committee made a very accurate survey of the river bed. It was abundantly clear that most of the extant moorings lay smack in the best water because the river bed had moved across the river some 50 feet. This necessitated moving virtually everybody! Now it is done I think that most people grant it a very great improvement - a true case of common co-operation for the common good.

In all the work the Committee has done I have been splendidly supported by its members, many having put in a great deal of work and personal time. Indeed it has been led, and so it should be since that is what a chairman is for, but contrary to the views expressed by a few every subject has been exhaustively debated and only consensus has gone forward.

The views that follow are mine, though echoed by a number of committee members. Carrying on and extending Michael Beeton's principles I have always felt that, though only representatives of boat users now remain on the committee, it should still adopt a strong 'public use' thrust and should at all times balance the service it provides to yachtsmen with those it should maintain for the public good. These are opposing forces. In an ideal world, I believe, all boats should live in 'off-river boat parks' - car parks and street parking are similar problems - so that the joys of unencumbered waterways may be had by all not least by yachtsmen and boat users themselves. This Dutch ideal is some years away yet and we need to live with and balance what we have today as best we can.

To this end I believe, with others of note on the river, that a common 'Fairway Committee' should have jurisdiction over the whole river embodying the above principles and rules, and undergoing the same public accountability. This would strengthen a common and publicly accountable approach to the use of the Deben as a 'boat park' and most certainly help in policing other abuses that the river's use is heir to. It would also act as a strong focus, with other local bodies, for action and co-ordination in the years ahead as the inevitable pressures rise on our beloved Deben.

We are all immensely privileged to have such a resource on our doorstep and it behoves all who enjoy it to work coherently towards its preservation. That preservation has to be balanced to the mutual benefit of all - from the shellduck chicks and herons and voles and fish, right through walkers, wildfowlers, canoeists, dinghy racers, water-skiers and other watersports people, and yachtsmen. Gone are the days when so simple a 'right' as being able to moor your boat can be allowed to impair the 'rights' of others - even the shellduck chicks!

I recognise that I shall not get cheers today from my fellow yachtsmen for promulgating such a view but good sense dictates that a better solution to the future use of the river than having it parked solid with boats that rarely move must be steadily aimed for. Such a solution will need much creative thinking but I believe that some solution to the balance of these uses has to be, and can be, found if enough will and co-operation is applied - I very strongly believe that if such a radical move can be achieved we shall all wonder afterwards why it was not done years ago.

Michael Burn.

## **Deben Week Yachtsman's Service**

The first Yachtsman's Service was held in All Saints Church, Waldringfield in 1936 or thereabouts. Alfred Stollery, whose family lived in the parish for several generations must have been the prime instigator of this service as he was a great friend of Canon Arthur Waller and had qualified as a Lay Reader in the Church of England. Canon Arthur Waller was no great sailing enthusiast; he was more of a sportsman in the shooting fraternity, whereas Alfred Stollery was a founder member of Waldringfield Sailing Club and mounted the pulpit regularly in Waldringfield Church when staying for the weekend here.

Hence, I suspect that it was at Alf's instigation that this service came about. It was held in Waldringfield Church followed by a soiree in the clubhouse afterwards. Effie Parker (Jem Goddard's Aunt) used to advertise the service with posters in illuminated script writing, one of which I have found in the church safe and have presented to the sailing club for framing, to be exhibited in the club house.

During the war years the service could not take place. Once peace returned the service continued to be held in the church during Deben Week until my father became the incumbent. He, of course, was a sailing

enthusiast and any excuse to get to the river on a Sunday could not be overlooked. Thus, he arranged for the service to be held in the clubhouse in 1949, the hymn singing being accompanied by the Woodbridge Excelsior Band with the preacher being escorted up or down the river to Waldringfield (tide permitting) as a preamble to the service. This caught on in a big way and became a highlight of Deben week. In 1973 I succeeded my father and became the incumbent and negotiated with the Deben Week Committee to have the service at the beginning of Deben Week, with the concession that racing could take place on the Sunday. The service itself was then conducted from the Commodore's yacht with the amplification on board to comply with the Gospel story - "Our Lord got into one of the boats which was Simon's and he asked him to put out a little from the land. Jesus then sat down and taught the people from the boat".

The Woodbridge Excelsior Band continues with its faithful support every year in accompanying the singing of the hymns. Waldringfield Sailing Club continues to offer generous hospitality to the band and the preacher with a soiree of a very refreshing nature in the clubhouse after the service.

Rev. John Waller  
All Saints Church  
Waldringfield.

## **Access**

Access to the British countryside is a much greater issue today than it was ten years ago, partly because some people are making considerable amounts of money by controlling access and partly because of the increased demand made by people who find themselves with more leisure time than ever before. Access to land is currently regulated by much legislation, including the Rights of Way Act which has successfully opened and kept open considerable numbers of footpaths. Unfortunately the same cannot be said for waterways, where the protection provided by the law seems to be woefully lacking. As in most areas of our life, where the law fails to protect us, money takes over and hence most waterways in Britain are now available to the highest bidder. (Normally Fishing Clubs!)

### **Access - The Law**

As mentioned in the Letters section of this newsletter (Frank Knights), some landowners threaten to bring the law to bear on trespassers. The following advice might be useful:-

a) Trespass is a Civil offence, not a Criminal one.

The Police are only interested in Criminal offences. Hence a landowner can only call the Police if a criminal offence is committed. i.e. damage is caused to the land! Normally however (e.g. hippie convoys) the landowner has to get an injunction from the courts against the offending individual(s), to convert a civil case into a criminal one. You would have to trespass for a long time if this process was to conclude. Hence, is calling the Police a real threat or just an empty vessel making a lot of noise? The latter I think!

b) When are you Trespassing?

For the purposes of this debate, water can be split into three main categories:-

#### **i) Tidal Water**

As a general rule you are allowed access to

all tidal water. The major exception is areas which are restricted by an act of Parliament. Applying this to the Deben leads me to believe that you are allowed access over all tidal waters from the Melton Mill to Felixstowe. If someone tells you that you are trespassing on his tidal water, then he is probably trying it on and you would be quite within your rights to tell him to get lost!

#### **ii) Non Tidal Water with a right of Navigation.**

Rivers which have been used for navigation over the years (including canals) are open to boat users who abide by the bye-laws. One of these bye-laws might require a licence to be purchased, whilst another might specify a maximum speed limit. But basically a right of navigation exists and providing you satisfy the river authority bye-laws you are allowed to use the waterway.

#### **iii) Non Tidal Water with No Right of Navigation.**

This covers the vast majority of rivers in England and Wales, including for instance, the River Deben above Melton Mill. On this type of river there is no right of navigation and hence access has to be negotiated. Every landowner who borders the river has a say and if any one person denies passage, then that part of the river is closed to all boaters. For example: ten years ago, there used to be a canoe race from Wickham Market to Woodbridge one Sunday every year. However one year a piece of land bordering the river was taken over by a business which set-up a conference centre in the grounds and decided that canoeists were a bad idea. The race has not been allowed to run since! There are 12,000 miles of physically canoeable rivers in England and Wales. Less than 10% of the 12,000 miles is available for use by canoeists under existing law!

#### **Access - A way forward.**

The following is extracted from the latest Canoeing Literature.

## A New Access Law

The British Canoe Union (BCU) is seeking to change the law to give powers to the National Rivers Authority (NRA), or other appropriate agency, to make access and management agreements for shared recreational use of river corridors. These powers should confer a duty to investigate and implement access agreements to a level which is sustainable by the environment.

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The BCU's aims are:

- **"A Change in the Law"**

Having tried to use the present legal system the BCU now realises that to-day's laws cannot ensure sensible and effective water access. A new legal framework is needed.

- **"To Give Powers to the NRA"**

The National Rivers Authority is acknowledged as the expert on the management of river corridors. They have a balanced overview of fisheries, conservation, commerce, sport and recreation. It is the ideal honest broker.

Nevertheless these extra duties for the NRA need to be defined in law. The NRA must be instructed by Parliament to promote full shared use of waterway resources, subject to the sustainability of the environment.

- **"To make access agreements"**

What counts is the "duty to make agreements". The British Canoe Union has been and always will be keen to enter into discussions to reach amicable access

agreements. In many cases this will work with few problems. However, if other parties refuse to discuss an agreement, the NRA must have the duty and power to implement a management plan which achieves shared use of waterways on a basis reasonable to all parties.

- **"Shared recreational use"**

Canoeists do not claim free and unrestricted access to all water. There will be limits: some will protect the river environment at sensitive times of the year: others will prevent conflict between river users. However, these limitations must be reasonable. One or two activities should not be able to monopolise parts of the county's recreational resources.

- **"Of river corridors"**

The best management plan will look at the entire river corridor; it will achieve an overall balance between all activities; it will not simply look at individual problem sites. Canoeing, like walking, is a linear activity. Canoeists should be able to paddle the whole length of a river, within reasonable limitations agreed with other users.

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As you can tell, I am a canoeist who feels very strongly about the access situation. If you would like more information about access to inland waters and the current BCU access campaign please feel free to contact me.

Tim Midwinter, Watersports Rep.

## Letters

Dear Members,

I am writing to introduce myself as a new RDA committee member representing the East Suffolk Water Ski Club (ESWSC).

I started watersports activities by sailing cadets at Waldringfield. As I found I was not competitive enough to race regularly, I moved to wind surfing and water-skiing, but still raced a 505 in the occasional Deben Week until last year when it was sold. I now spend most of my time skiing and sit on the ESWSC committee and the Felixstowe Ferry Management committee where I represent the Ski Club.

In case anyone is still reading this, you may be interested to know that ESWSC has around 120 members and 40 Registered boats. There is a waiting list for boat registration which we limit to 40 boats partly to ease congestion on our small stretch of water just up from the Felixstowe Ferry moorings.

On the subject of congestion, it may surprise you to know that many of the speedboats around on the river are not club members and are as much a nuisance to us as to other river users. One reason is that skiing requires flat water and boats all over the river cause a chop. Another reason is that if non members create a nuisance, especially by skiing where they shouldn't, our club still gets the blame even though we have no more jurisdiction over them than anyone else.

Hopefully, by representing the Ski Club on the River Deben Association committee, I will be able to answer any questions raised regarding skiing, power boating and general activities at the Felixstowe Ferry end of the River.

Steve James

Dear Sir,

On the afternoon of Sunday 16 August, my wife and I decided that as the tide was convenient we would take one of our infrequent trips up to the higher reaches of the Deben. In view of the following rather unpleasant episode, I feel that the River Deben Association should be made aware of our concern.

When we passed under the rail bridge at Melton, some distance further on a fallen tree across the river impeded our passage in the dinghy. However, we did manage to manoeuvre between two small branches. Some distance upstream we observed a larger fallen tree which would be impossible to pass; however, before reaching this obstruction, we were approached by a gentleman on the Melton Mill side of the river who wished us a good afternoon, but then said "You are on private property. I must ask you to leave." This we refused to do, stating that the river was tidal at this point. After a short, by now heated, argument we were told that the Police would be called, which he said he had had to do a number of times in the past, although most of the so-called trespassers had returned with good grace, which we again refused to do.

At this point the gentleman turned and ran back to the house, we thought to call the Police. We delayed our departure for some minutes, but the tide having turned, we retraced our course downstream. By the time we reached the railway bridge, the tide had dropped about 12-14" - we took particular note of this fact!

Before closing I must mention that as a boy living in Melton, it is well over sixty years since I first navigated the Upper Deben in a skiff, without let or hindrance as far as the Melton Mill. I was also on friendly terms with the farmer at Decoy Farm for many years who used to winter his converted ships

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lifeboat to the river bank above the railway bridge.

How long, I ask, before we have a wooden fence across the river. Shades of Kyson Point?

Incidentally, the NRA confirm over the phone to my wife that the river is tidal as far as Melton Mill.

Frank Knights

Dear Sir

It was very disappointing to read in the Spring Newsletter the contrast between the views expressed on development in Woodbridge - how if one development is allowed to proceed into the green belt, others will fall in behind (page 7) - and those in the letter on page 16, urging the building of a marina at Kings Fleet.

What is the point of the Felixstowe Ferry Foreshore Safeguard Action if behind it there is to be a "major yacht harbour" with it's shoreside facilities and car parking. I do not doubt that Captain Walters "modest developer" would soon prove to have immodest thoughts on the infrastructure necessary to support the investment that a large modern marina entails.

He appears to have overlooked at least three other major considerations:

1. The road to and through the Ferry is already under considerable pressure in the summer months. Could it sustain this extra traffic without widening.
2. How far can the Deben itself absorb these extra boats in addition to the 75 berths proposed at Robertsons? There must come a time when further berths or moorings will tend to destroy the very pleasures that attract people to come. Have you seen the River Hamble on a Saturday in summer?
3. Has he looked down on this site from the

landward side - from Falkenham, Kirton and Hemley - and considered the impact of buildings and carpark on a marvellously unspoilt sweep of countryside?

Suffolk Coastal's Local Plan has wisely insisted that "the development of new yacht harbours and marinas will be resisted and extensions to existing facilities will not normally be permitted within the AONB". By publishing this letter without any presentation of the alternative viewpoint, your Newsletter appears to give its blessing to a proposal that seems directly contrary to the Association's objectives and to put it in conflict with the District Council's policies.

I hope that this is the result of the lack of an Editor rather than deliberate policy. But I trust there will be an opportunity to raise this at the AGM on 9<sup>th</sup> April under Any Other Business.

Tim Voelcker

### **Editor's Note.**

*I feel that a few words are called for in response to this letter.*

- a) *Editorial Policy. It is my policy, and that of the committee, NOT to censure or edit contributions to the newsletter except to correct minor grammatical errors. We believe that the RDA should be a forum for the free and frank exchange of views. I hope it is fairly clear that the official RDA view of the world is expressed in the 'RDA Business' section of the Newsletter, whereas the other sections express peoples personal views.*
- b) *Mr Voelcker did not raise this matter at the AGM. He is most welcome to raise it at the forthcoming General meeting, or at any other time convenient to him.*

*Tim Midwinter*