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Chairman's Comment

In my first column as your chairman I feel I must introduce myself to those of you who have not met me and let you have my "credentials" for holding this post.

My parents first showed me the River Deben in 1952 and every year since then I have enjoyed sailing the whole length of this beautiful estuary, seeing its changing moods, exploring the upper reaches beyond Wilford Bridge in a dinghy, walking the seawalls and paths on both sides, enjoying fishing both trawling and with a line, swimming in its sometimes murky waters, eating its mussels, bird watching, drinling at all its pubs and as both skipper and crew enjoyed messing about on the river.

At the AGM in April, I thanked Anni Healey on your behalf and I repeat those thanks here. Anni has been involved in the Association from its conception and was a very active and hard working chairman. Luckily Anni is keen to continue on the committee and has a watching brief over all planning applications that may effect the river.

Our submissions to the Suffolk County Council regarding the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Management Plan has taken a lot of committee time, thought and effort recently. It has been a very interesting exercise ensuring that we looked at all aspects that effect the river and its immediate environment. In the end we sent two reports, one waterbased and one land based. Copies of these are included in the Reports section of this Newsletter. Our thoughts, ideas and comments in these reports represent the way forward and highlight many of the aims of the Association.

We still need a Secretary. This is not a particularly onerous task as the minutes of

the meetings are very capably covered by Annette Burt. The job involves writing a few letters, booking venues for meetings, etc. and I believe would be fun for somebody who would like to give a little more to the Association than just their membership fee. Do not wait to be asked! If you would like to discuss the post with me just give me a call - Please!!

The finishing touches to the river wall in Woodbridge have been very slow and although we and many other people made representation to the NRA and the Council nothing much seemed to happen. A dispute with the contractors was blamed.

And finally, before finishing, I would like to thank all committee members for their time and effort including Dan Johnson who joined us at the AGM.

Please write or call if you have anything interesting to discuss and please come to the Open Meeting in October and volunteer for the litter collection.

Anthony Mason

Chairman

Association Business

Treasurer's Report

At the time of writing (14 August 1993) the funds stand as follows:

 General Fund
 £750

 Projects Fund
 £3,177

 Total Net Assets
 £3,927

£100 has been given from the Projects Fund to the Waldringfield Fairway Committee to help with the cost of removing anti-invasion metal stakes which have been resurfacing near Waldringfield.

Terence Kermode Treasurer

Committee Vacancies

Secretary

We are actively looking for a Secretary. As we already have a Minutes Secretary, this post covers such tasks as writing the occasional letter, booking rooms for meetings etc. If you are interested please contact Anthony Mason.

Litter Clearance Organiser

The Litter Clearance Organiser is responsible for the overall organisation of the organisation's litter clearance activities. There are already well established litter clearance groups for most stretches of the river and hence the organiser is mainly responsible for the County Council coordination. If you are interested please contact Anthony Mason.

Forthcoming Events

Friday 15 October 1993

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

Speaker: Cmdr M Burley RN, MBE. will talk on "Elephant Island".

Sunday 17 October 1993 Litter Clearance

30 October 1993

Newbourne Springs Suffolk Wildlife Trust Reserve work party. All help gratefully received. Please bring wellies and a packed lunch. Meet 10am, Reserve Car Park.

Who's Who

Officers

Chairman	Anthony Mason. 29 Ipswich Rd, Woodbridge.	2 0394 386601
Vice Chairman	Michael Atkins. Rudd's Barn, Waldringfield Rd, Martlesham	2 0473 36668
Secretary (Temporary)	Anne Moore. 2 Grundisburgh Rd, Woodbridge.	☎ 0394 383559
Treasurer	Terence Kermode. 8 Carmelite Place, Woodbridge.	2 0394 386613
Minutes Sec.	Annette Burt. 21 Kingston Rd, Woodbridge.	☎ 0394 385535
Press Sec.	Rosemary Schlee. Deben Lodge, Melton Rd, Wdge.	2 0394 382740

Committee Members

COMMITTEE INTO		
Felixstowe Ferry	y David White. 6 Coniston Close, Felixstowe.	2 0394 283972
History	Robert Simper. Sluice Cottage, Ramsholt.	☎ 0394 411273
Business	Moray Macphail. Woodbridge Boat Store	2 0394 380390
Houseboats	Lil Tudor-Craig. ML2605, Wilford Bridge Rd, Melton.	2 0394 386011
Wildfowlers	Adrian Judge. 29 Bredfield St, Wdge. IP12 4NH	☎ 0394 383350
Watersports	Tim Midwinter. 37 Coopers Rd, Martlesham Heath.	2 0473 623020
SCDC Liaison	Russell Geen. 41 Hasketon Rd, Wdge. IP12 4LE	2 0394 383696
Water-Ski Club	Steve James. 28 Burnham Close, Ipswich.	2 0473 274254
General Liaison	Ian Battye. Ferry House, Quayside, Woodbridge.	2 0394 382338
Planning	Anni Healey. Jesters, 7A Burkitt Rd, Woodbridge.	2 0394 382291
Angling	Don Johnson. Ivy Dene, Melton Hill, Melton.	2 0394 383661

Volunteers Wanted

Ever thought that the countryside near you could do with some tender loving care? If so, then now's your chance to get your wellies on and have a go! Let us know what you think needs to be done and we'll help to get you started. Contact Annette Lea, Coast and Heaths Warden for details on 0394 384948. This is your chance to make a noticeable difference to your local environment!

In the meantime if you're itching to get stuck in, why not join the work party at Newborne Springs Suffolk Wildlife Trust Reserve on the 30th October. Meet in the Reserve car park at 10am. Bring wellies and a packed lunch!

/ Editor's Note.

We know most members of the RDA have joined because they love the River Deben and it's surrounding countryside. Hence, we see one of the major roles of the Association is to pass information on to members about what is going on and how they can help. The call for help in the previous article, along with the details of Litter Clearances etc. are all included as part of this information dissemination process. If any members have projects of their own which they feel other members of the Association would be interested in helping with, please pass details to the Editor.

Reports

Suffolk Coast and Heaths Management Plan

Changes are afoot on the Suffolk Coast!

Its unique character and beauty has long been valued by those who live, work and play here, but did you realise that it has been an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) since 1969? This is a national status with the dual aims of conservation and sustainable management.

To further these ideals, an imaginative leap was taken in April by all the Local Authorities, English Nature, Suffolk Wildlife Trust and other bodies who joined forces to create the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Project. The new Project has united the Heritage Coast Project, the Shotley Peninsula Project and the Suffolk Coastal District Council Countryside Rangers Team and will work throughout the whole AONB. It will also extend across to the south side of the River Stour.

A management plan has been drawn up and

will be launched for public consultation in September by Jeff Redgrave, the new Project Officer. This aims to provide a framework for improving co-operation, co-ordination and commitment from all the agencies involved along the coast. Because of the diversity of this large area, smaller "Management Zones" have been created including the Deben Estuary Zone (6).

The thoughts of your River Deben Association have been incorporated into this plan which emphasises the importance of conserving the tranquil nature of the river, its rich landscape and fine wildlife habitats, with a balanced level of recreational use. A forum for all the organisations with an interest in the river will be the first step to achieving this goal.

You will have the opportunity to find out more about the new Project and what it means to the River Deben at your Open Meeting on Friday 15 October at which Jeff Redgrave and Annette Lea will be presenting the Project and fielding any questions you might have.

The Association's comments to Suffolk County Council regarding the Management Plan are:-

1) LAND BASED ASSESSMENT

The River Deben valley, from the estuary to Wilford Bridge, is largely undeveloped. This is primarily because the bulk of the area is owned by a few landowners who have resisted commercialisation of their land, and because there are few points of access to the river. Thus a landscape exists which is becoming increasingly rare in the Southeast of England and should therefore be preserved.

Development

We cannot, however, prevent all further development within Zone 6, but we should try to ensure that it is compatible with the environment. With the withdrawal of the American forces from Bentwaters and Woodbridge airbases, these sites will be converted to other uses such as industrial. educational, residential and a commercial This should be airbase. the only development (or perhaps change of use) within Zone 6. Their influence is such that all other significant developments should be resisted with the possible exception of Bawdsey Manor. This property is the only that lends itself to acceptable conversion to large-scale leisure use, i.e. hotel/chalet holiday units and outdoor facilities such as golf, sailing and general

As agriculture becomes a less important and profitable industry, farmers will be keen to maximise revenue from other uses. Existing farm buildings and cottages could be converted into small industrial units or holiday homes. Such change of use must be contained within the existing buildings and should not involve extensive new structures.

Land use - We would encourage Countryside Stewardship schemes for farmland on both sides of the river, where conservation and public enjoyment of the countryside can be combined with commercial farming.

Tourism

Whilst we accept that tourism to the area will increase, we consider it should be channelled to avoid problems, i.e. sustainable and low impact. Thus we would strongly discourage the creation of large caravan parks as they are visually intrusive. Tourists should be encouraged to follow country pursuits such as horse riding, walking, sailing/canoeing, bird watching, etc. besides the typical country sports. Activities such as trials biking, 4-wheel drive rallying and other motorised activities should be positively discouraged.

Room must be found for day trippers, whether local or long-distance, and, as such, car parks are essential. They should not be provided on demand and everywhere. Car parks should be sited well away from the river, so as not to be intrusive, with adequate footpaths down to the water.

Review of existing car parks

Felixstowe Ferry - Currently there is no public car park and in the summer months the whole system depends on the tolerance of the locals and the providers of private car parking facilities, such as the yacht club.

The public should be encouraged to use the cliff top car park near the dip and walk to the ferry. A small car park should be provided at the ferry and greater control exercised to limit random parking because of local conflict.

Waldringfield - There are three car parks all in the same area behind the Maybush Inn. One belongs to the pub, one is leased by the Sailing Club and the other is for public use, but is not adequately signposted. Any further parking facilities, if required, should be provided at the entrance to the village rather than at the riverside. The narrow roads are very congested in summer

and the character of the village would be destroyed if they were widened.

Martlesham Creek - There is very limited parking space near the creek and this situation should be continued. There is a small car park by Martlesham Church which provides ramblers with very reasonable access.

Woodbridge/Melton - Car parking here is provided within the town and is currently adequate except, probably, for Saturdays. The area between the railway and the river is now largely turned over to boating in one form or another. There are two exceptions, i.e. the meadows between Kyson Point and Eversons Boatyard, and the land from Sun Wharf to about a quarter of a mile beyond the sewage works (the start of the new marina). These should be retained as natural wild habitat to help protect the river from encroaching development.

East Bank of the Deben - There are only two points of public access by car along the whole length of the east bank of the Deben, that is at Ramsholt and Bawdsey. Public access in both cases is dependent on the goodwill of adjacent landowners and, if necessary, should become statutory. The car park at Ramsholt is essential but we are not sure of its ownership.

Disabled parking

Where possible, facilities should be made for disabled people in wheelchairs to have access and reserved parking.

Footpaths

Suffolk County Council have been keen to develop their circular walks and this is to be encouraged. Paths should be unsurfaced and well signed to keep within the character of the area and prevent trespass onto private land. Some paths close to developed areas should be surfaced to provide access for wheelchairs and pushchairs: a good, successful example of this is the river wall between Woodbridge and Kyson Point.

Nominally there is a footpath along the west bank of the River Deben Felixstowe Ferry and Melton Bridge. However, there are two breaches of the river wall either side of Waldringfield, i.e. at Early Creek and Cross Farm. It should be the aim of the Management Plan to find a diversion around these breaches, or to bridge them. Negotiations with nearby farmers, ramblers and Local Authorities should take place to look at possible help with the formation of circular walks and diversion of existing footpaths which cause conflict with agriculture.

The long-term survival of the East Coast Railway is very doubtful. The railway provides a natural barrier at Woodbridge, discouraging development right up to the river bank. In the event of the railway being shut this barrier needs to be maintained. Beyond the limits of the town it provides a pleasant way through the countryside. We therefore suggest that if the railway is closed down, the whole line from Ipswich to Lowestoft should be taken over by Suffolk County Council and converted into a cycle/bridle way/footpath with suitable low level developments at key points providing cafe and toilet facilities.

Sea defences

It has been shown that the proportion of salt marsh present is related to the height of sea wall required to protect the land. We support the concept of managed retreat' and/or the development of salt marsh. Possible areas might be below Ramsholt and at Cross Farm, Waldringfield. Managed retreat is more environmentally and economically sensible than repairing old or building new sea walls.

Pollution

Pollution of any type, including noise, should be closely monitored and controlled.

2) Water Sports And Leisure Pursuits

The development of the river Deben from its historic commercial use to one devoted almost entirely to leisure pursuits has occurred in a largely unplanned manner. We have been fortunate in having land owners on either side of the river who have preserved the banks from commercial development and who have restricted access to the river. The Fairway Committees and Sailing Clubs have developed their own interests without (arguably) too much encroachment on the facilities but, as the draft of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Management Plan says, we have reached saturation point in terms of the number of boat moorings. The Fairway Committees have done much to control this, but it could be argued that now we require a co-ordinated plan to ensure that the use of the existing water of the River Deben should be controlled to avoid conflict.

Yacht Moorings

An actual count taken 3 years ago established that there are over 1,100 swinging moorings in the river and 282 marina moorings. Other users of the river are undoubtedly restricted by boats on moorings, and the delight of a clear stretch of water is welcome. However, we cannot envisage the river not having swinging moorings.

The Fairway Committees lease their stretch river the from the Crown Commissioners, and when the Knoll Committee is finally established, the whole navigable length of the river will be under jurisdiction of the 5 Fairway Committees. It is not unreasonable to assume that the Crown Commissioners' main aim is to maximise their income. They have no control over the number of moorings each Fairway Committee authorises, but merely insist the main channel is kept clear; nor does any planning

authority have a say in the number of moorings laid down. In fact, it is through the good sense of the present Fairway Committees - who are the only controlling body - that the river has not got moorings throughout its length.

We recommend that the Suffolk Coastal and Heaths Management plan should have some power to restrict the number of moorings in each Fairway Committee stretch and control the extent of the moorings so those stretches of the river which at present are free of moorings should remain so.

Fairway Committees are powerful brokers for controlling use of the water but there is no Code of Practice binding on either the Crown Commissioners or the controlling bodies. It is felt that a Code of Practice for Fairway Committees should be developed which may include some element of public election and they should be non profit making. We suggest the Waldringfield Fairway Committee, with its Annual Meeting open to the public and membership made up from several local interests, is a reasonable example of how they should be run.

The thought that a Fairway Committee could be taken over by a less scrupulous and profit making body is extremely worrying.

Marinas

In addition to the above, there are 282 marina berths. Development of marinas is restricted by the local Structure Plan which we support. It is a fallacy to assume that marinas reduce the number of swinging moorings.

Sailing dinghies

Sailing and racing occurs at Felixstowe Ferry, Ramsholt, Waldringfield and Woodbridge. Although there is some conflict between the racers and the moored yachts, this is inevitable and is probably no greater than that caused by the non-racing

dinghy. Sail training is organised in several areas - for both children and adults - and this should be encouraged.

Rowing, canoeing, potterers and explorers afloat

The river Deben lends itself to short outings and explorations, when the delights of the river are most appreciated. These outings often involve landing at beaches which are inaccessible from the land to all but walkers and cause little conflict.

Water skiers

The concentration of water skiing in the de-restricted area above Felixstowe Ferry appears to satisfy most people's needs. The Club is well run and conflict with other river users is kept to a minimum. The problem with water skiers who are not members of the Club is greater and there is no effective method of control.

Jet skiers

Causes for concern here are noise and excessive speed, with some modern models reaching up to 30 knots in a very short distance. Some moves are being made by manufacturers to register craft, produce quieter engines and to provide registration plates. Due to the extensive use of the river Deben by so many other activities and because of its status as an area of outstanding natural beauty, it could be argued that jet skiers should be banned as they do conflict with most other river users.

Wind surfers

The river is not the ideal place for a sailboard and the few that do take to the water cause little conflict

Wildfowlers

A sport which causes little conflict.

Swimming

Generally this does not conflict with other sports and, where it does, it is recommended that certain areas of beach are clearly marked as restricted to bathers.

Fishermen

These are not excessive on the river and cause little conflict.

Houseboats

These exist on the upper tidal part of the river and on the mud flats at Felixstowe Ferry. They are long established, but any attempt to extend their domain or numbers should be regulated.

Flora and fauna

It is imperative that any development which damages or reduces the bird and fish population as well as natural vegetation should be resisted.

Commercial river trips

There are two operating at the moment and they are a very satisfactory way of showing visitors the river without causing conflict.

Conclusions

There is a real danger that overuse of the river will destroy the qualities which make it the environmental delight that it is. We are fortunate that access to the river is restricted and this has, and will continue to protect the water. It is recommended that no new points of access should be created. Clearly the Deben is a tourist attraction - not only to visiting vachtsmen, but also to those drawn to the beauties of the area. Control of the area rests with the owners of the land bordering the river, the owners of businesses alongside the river including several boatyards, the Fairway Committees and the local Planning Authority, and we would recommend that the latter authority has definite guidelines for its decisions. We recommend the establishment of stretches of open water (which already exist), the control of the number of moorings of each Fairway Committee, a Code of Practice for controlling bodies and the enforcement of speed limits.

Planning Update

In the last 6 months there have been few planning applications. One is listed below:-

C90/1001 Proposed Dredging of River Bed and formation of mooring artea for 40 boats, Dock Lane, Melton.

We supported the Local Authority in turning down this application because of the policy in the local structure plan, restricting marinas on the Deben, the close proximity of existing marinas and the disturbance to bird life at this narrow part of the Deben. We supported the extension of land based activities at the Dock Lane boat yard.

Do let me know if there are any planning matters coming up in your area that you would like the association to comment on. I am most grateful to all of you who have kept your ears to the ground and pen to paper.

Anni Healey

Articles

Tribes of the Deben

The Wuffas

Tribe members. Wehha, Tyttla, Raedwald (Handy for leaks) Eni, Raegenhere, Eorpwald, Aethelhere, Anna, Aethelwald and Aethelric.

They were a unique tribe. Short and stocky, with hirsute features, in the middle of which was a very long tongue.

It was this fact that got me interested in the first place for:-

- a) I have always had reference made regarding the length of my tongue.
- b) Whilst at school, Fonnereau House, Ipswich, it was only the girls from Woodbridge who were able to, not only stick their tongues out at the History teacher, but actually, with great skill managed to lick the knot in the school tie with their lowered tongues or alternatively with raised tongues cover their noses!

This enormity of tongue proved a stumbling block, so to speak, for the Wuffings could not pronounce W's at all. They always came out as L's. (When no one else is around, try hanging your tongue out between upper and lower lips and say "Wuffas worked well in the Wuffing woods".)

In the 6th and 7th Centuries, when the Wuffas were at their Zenith, there was a lot more water in the Deben than there is now and so they set to and created a large fleet of clinker built boats in which they made sorties up and down river. This activity brought out the competitive spirit in them and they encouraged Wuffing. This is still carried on to this very day. i.e. Luffing!

Those of us who have dug for "Artefacts" at the Tips (And who hasn't?) know that many human teeth come easily to spade and archaeologists reason that, due to the extra long tongue the Wuffings teeth got in the way too much, so the lesser of two evils was the removal of all teeth when the second set arrived. Old maps reveal that the name for that area, now known as the Tips, was "Grinders Lay".

We now go down the river a short way to:-

The Effings

We have been fortunate enough to trace the names of King Effings immediate family. King Effing had a Queen, Bee, and they had a family:- Sod, Slob, Twurp, Wynd, Liaa, Likley and his unidentical twin, NottLikely. (I don't need to remind you that in those far off times there was no rigid code as to the order in which names were applied. With some Kings the tribal name came first - with others it followed.

Whichever seemed to be the most appropriate at the time was used.) Philologists confirm that the expression used nowadays when someone does not want to do something "Not Effing Likely" can be attributed to the Effings of Suffolk.

The Effings had settlements on both sides of the river and it was possible to cross at low tide from one side to the other via a Causeway. This ran from Urnisyud on the West bank, to winkulhud and then on to the East bank at Wehhas Wade.

In temperament the Effings acted according to which way the wind was blowing at the time and the phase of the Moon. They were intelligent and aggressive. They, like the Wuffing tribe, were also boat builders relying on deer skins stretched over Wythies to fashion Coracle shaped craft Effingbols. They accidentally invented the Bollostik missile around the 6th Century, for they found that their small Effingbols were very unstable in bad weather so they dug out the local Coprolite and used this as "Bollost". They had a little man (the fore runner of the present day Cox) who sat crouched in what he anticipated to be the front of the round Effingbol and if the Wuffas from up river and the Offings from Down River came too close, he would shout "Get out of the Effingsway" and then shower them with well aimed Coprolite grabbed up from the orlops.

The Offings

The Offings occupied the whole of the N/E Bank of the river, from what is now known as Kingsfleet, to the sea. Just as a throw away piece of information, this was originally known as Kingsfeet. King Offinga had a small tongue, but boasted an enormous pair of feet. After a night of carousing, on what is now the site of the Ramsholt Arms, King Offinga, like many others before and since, thought he could walk on water and he sailed forth, only to flounder in mid-stream and drown, with his

vast soles uppermost. His son was delighted to become the new King at the age of 16 and cried out to his cronies who were known as the local RAMS, "Rams, Hold Arms, and dance till we drop". That area to this very day is still known as the Ramsholtarms.

The Offings kept themselves to themselves and anything that happened to come their way they kept for themselves as well. Upriver tribes feared for their vessels when travelling down river to the open sea and not without reason for the Offings got their names from the fact that they were always on the lookout to see if anything "was in the Offing". Direct descendants are actively engaged in carrying out the traditions of this enterprising tribe and are very much in evidence during what is now affectionately called Deben Week.

Kate Jones

(By kind permission of Vivian Mason)

Committee Meeting Jottings

The idea of varying the venue for our General Meetings came to fruition when the Annual General Meeting was held at Felixstowe Ferry Sailing Club (by kind permission) in April. The hall was quite full, the opportunity to refresh with alcohol instead of coffee appealed to many, and our new Chairman, Anthony Mason, was installed with many expressions of thanks to his predecessor. Anni Healey, who has done so much for the Association. The most significant moment of the evening came when the Treasurer was asked what percentage of the members paid their subscription by Bankers Order. He replied that he did not know the percentage, but as a fraction it was approximately forty six seventy thirds. Those of us who knew a little about vulgar fractions had not come across any fraction quite so vulgar as that one, and interval refreshments came at a very necessary moment for many of us to

recover from such a startling number. The meeting ended with a most interesting illustrated talk from Michael Beaton entitled "Mills on the Deben".

And so we returned to the Seckford Arms for our first meeting under our new Chairman. I am not sure if it was the lack of an agenda that caused, or did not cause, the meeting to be the shortest on record, but certainly we had plenty of time afterwards to carry on proceedings round the bar. It was during this meeting that the new Chairman indicated the way he was thinking when he expressed the hope that we could find some retired people to take on some of the tasks. There were rumblings in the gent's loo "Doesn't he realise that the summer is a very busy time for us retired people." My main memory of that meeting is of legs - particularly ex-Chairman's legs. One ex-Chairman was wearing the shortest mini skirt I have seen for a long time, and when asked why she explained that she had attended an important meeting that day, and she wanted to create the right impression. The other ex-Chairman, at the end of the meeting, suddenly stretched out in agony, clearly suffering a severe attack of cramp in

his leg. Whilst I massaged his leg to help him recover, I could not help feeling that I would rather have been rubbing the other ex-Chairman's leg.

The remaining meetings have centred on the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Management Plan, an imaginative idea to exercise some influence on the development of the coastal and heath land regions of Suffolk from the Stour to Lowestoft. We decided to submit two reports on our area. One on Water Sports and Leisure pursuits, and the other on Land Based Assessment. Both reports were produced by sub-Committees, but when presented to the main Committee, they were initially praised, and then extensively revised. The Chairman did a remarkable job of controlling the discussion and apparently taking comprehensive note of the amendments, which - it is hoped will bear some resemblance to the notes taken at the same time by the Secretary. Rather unfairly, we left him as the only person capable of rewriting the reports incorporating the amendments. But then what are Chairmen for?

Michael Atkins

Please Note.

We have included a copy of the Revised Constitution, as agreed at the last AGM, with this copy of the newsletter.

River Deben Association

AUTUMN OPEN MEETING

Woodbridge Community Hall Friday October 15th at 7.30pm

Everyone Welcome Come and Put YOUR Views.

After the General Meeting

Commander Malcolm Burley RN, MBE

will give an Illustrated talk

"Elephant Island"

(Near the Falklands)