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Chairman's Comment

Having first visited Sark in 1965, I was very excited at the thought of returning there this August, 29 years later, whilst my wife and I were cruising in the Channel Islands.

Practically nothing has changed - still no cars, bicycles being the main form of transport and as far as we could see only one new house built in that time. Livings are made either from the land or looking after the tourists - although those tourists are not pampered. If they want bright lights, theme parks and the like they are available elsewhere. Sark is for peace and tranquillity. The number of people on the island at any one time is self regulated both by the number of beds available and the seats on the ferries bringing people from Guernsey. Yachts can anchor in some of the bays but very few stay for long because of the continuous, uncomfortable swell - of course there is no marina. The island therefore is never crowded.

Joining a small community for their Sunday family service at St Peters Church was a memorable experience; in fact the whole visit was magical and a wonderful way to recharge oneself.

Returning to the Deben gave me the same thrill. Sailing in over the bar at Felixstowe Ferry and ghosting up river on the last of the evening breeze, even though it meant the end of a holiday was exciting. The Deben is thankfully relatively unspoilt despite modern pressures and it is up to us all to fight to keep it that way. If people want marinas, bright lights and the like they are available elsewhere. The Deben is also mainly for peace and tranquillity.

As the local population increases the Deben valley will inevitably attract more people to enjoy those qualities. One positive step being taken by the Association is to look

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into the feasibility of bridging the gaps in the river wall on the west bank so that ramblers can again walk from Woodbridge to Felixstowe Ferry.

Like the people of Sark, we have a precious inheritance to maintain.

Anthony Mason
Chairman

Association Business

Forthcoming Events

Friday, 7 October 1994

Open Meeting
Woodbridge Community Hall, 19:30.
Followed by a talk from Mr Keith Turner on "Countryside Management in the Suffolk Coastal Area".

Sunday, 9 October 1994

Annual Litter Clearance.
HW Woodbridge at 16:00.
Trevor Ambrose, who put in so much work last year co-ordinating the Litter Clearance, has kindly agreed to organise it again for another year. Those willing to help with this valuable work should contact their team leader or the organiser Trevor on Woodbridge (01394) 386021

Friday, 21 April 1995

Annual General Meeting
Woodbridge Community Hall, 19:30.

Rowing On The Deben

Woodbridge Cruising Club have purchased a Cox 4, rowing skiff. Some repairs are required but it should be ready next autumn. *John*

It's good to see rowing again on the Deben. The last club folded in 1934.

The Cruising Club are looking for oarsmen (and oarswomen) of all ages and abilities who would like to learn to row, or maybe test their skills and revive former glories!

If you are interested, please ring Perry Donsworth on 01728 723555.

The Association would like to wish the Cruising Club every success in this new initiative and look forward to the addition of another water sport to the river.

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Who's Who

Officers

Chairman	✓ Anthony Mason. 29 Ipswich Rd, Wdge. IP12 4BS	☎ 01394 386601
Vice Chairman	✓ Michael Atkins. Rudd's Barn, Waldringfield Rd, Martlesham. IP12 4PJ	☎ 01473 736668
Secretary	✓ Harry Norris. Deben Vane, Ipswich Rd, Wdge. IP12 4BS	☎ 01394 384442
Treasurer	✓ Terence Kermode. 8 Carmelite Place, Wdge. IP12 1DR	☎ 01394 386613
Minutes Sec.	✓ Annette Burt. 21 Kingston Rd, Wdge. IP12 4AY	☎ 01394 385535
Press Sec.	✓ Rosemary Schlee. Deben Lodge, Melton Rd, Wdge. IP12 1NH	☎ 01394 382740

Committee Members

Felixstowe Ferry	✓ David White. 6 Coniston Close, Felixstowe. IP11 9SW	☎ 01394 283972
History	✓ Robert Simper. Sluice Cottage, Ramsholt.	☎ 01394 411273
Business	Moray Macphail. Woodbridge Boat Store, Lime Kiln Quay Wdge. IP12 1BD	☎ 01394 380390
Environment	Lil Tudor-Craig. ML2605, Wilford Bridge Rd, Melton. IP12 1RB	☎ 01394 386011
Wildfowlers	Adrian Judge. 29 Bredfield St, Wdge. IP12 4NH	☎ 01394 383350
Watersports	Tim Midwinter. 37 Coopers Rd, Martlesham Heath. Ipswich. IP5 7SJ	☎ 01473 623020
SCDC Liaison	Russell Geen. 41 Hasketon Rd, Wdge. IP12 4LE	☎ 01394 383696
Water-Ski Club	Steve James. 28 Burnham Close, Ipswich. IP4 4ED	☎ 01473 274254
General Liaison	✓ Ian Battye. Ferry House, Quayside, Wdge. IP12 1BN	☎ 01394 382338
Planning	✓ Anni Healey. Jesters, 7A Burkitt Rd, Wdge. IP12 4JJ	☎ 01394 382291
Angling	Don Johnson. Ivy Dene, Melton Hill, Melton. IP12 1AX	☎ 01394 383661
Footpaths	✓ Anne Moore. 2 Grundisburgh Rd, Wdge. IP12 4HG	☎ 01394 383559

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Articles

Tide Mill Quay Development.

Who is working for the future of Woodbridge?

Woodbridge is at the head of the River Deben. I wonder how many people realise the number of visitors whether by foot, car or bus who visit the Tide Mill and of course, by boat to the yacht harbour. They bring significant cash not only to Woodbridge but to the anchorages of Felixstowe Ferry, Ramsholt and Waldringfield on the way up. Compared with the Market Hill area which over the years has had much time and money devoted to it, the Tide Mill area seems surprisingly under appreciated and resourced.

To Quote the EADT Wednesday, 14 September 1994:-

"Thousands of tourists have flocked to Woodbridge and helped traders have more confidence in the future.... The Tide Mill Yacht Harbour has bought in about 6,000 people to the town. Last year 1,500 boats moored at the site on the River Deben, but manager, Richard Kember, expects to have 1,700 by the end of this season. About 400 of these boats will have come from Europe with an average of three people on board and they stay for 2 nights. The figures every year have been going up and up.... Tony and Jo Prentice who have run the Captains Table restaurant in Woodbridge for 26 years have had their best season for 6 years.... 'There's very much a good feel factor about at the moment and we have a lot of Continental visitors' Mr Prentice said. The Tide Mill clocked up a record 14,700 visitors last year in it's bicentenary..."

In view of this I ask myself what individual vision District and Town Councillors and Planners have for the first half of the next century, as the number of tourists will

inevitably increase substantially. Collectively I find it very difficult to believe that they have any vision beyond the next year or two and prefer to keep a low profile. You can look at what has happened at the Whisstocks site, with the cheque book of the developer and the pressure it exerts on decision making often being decisive. There is one notable exception, Bawsey Manor, of which more anon.

The original, main building proposed for the Whisstocks site, was bigger than the whole Granary. Councillors, Planners and many others considered it excessive by any standards and asked for modified plans. But the idea that there should be development on the whole site on this scale became established, thus preventing any alternative concept, such as the value of an open space (apart from some parking) being considered. The importance of this area as a lung for tourism and the imaginative use of it was ignored. The planners will say that it was zoned for industrial use - that was true in the last century. All the indications are that in the next century - and only recently is it becoming clear - that tomorrow, whether we like it or not, it will probably be the major source of prosperity for the town. This may have gone against policy and structure plans but what are elected Councillors there for but to ask for alternative recommendations if they are to the benefit for the town? Are plans 'Dogma' as they too often have been in the past or are they a guide for elected Councillors to vary in order to meet long term changing needs?

That's for the general principle - now for the details.

What surprised me is that on a site of this importance to the town, that they would not wish to be quite clear as to what was/is agreed in some detail first.

What perturbed me was that this could be

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their final say (for the Councillors) in the middle of an exceptionally hot spell in the holiday months. They would be under pressure to (presumably) state their views and record their votes. Planners and Architects have had months discussing many alternatives and this is only the second time, and at very short notice, that Councillors seemed to have any idea of the way things were going.

After a short discussion the Councillors agreed that the planners should have authority to go ahead with full development. Some conditions were imposed concerning minor details and that the continued operation of the boatyard from the site would not be prejudiced by the proposals. To me there was more than a whiff of bulldozing/acquiescence in the quiet, relatively unquestioning acceptance of Planners/Developers proposals.

If Woodbridge is to have a theme for its' future it requires no marketing genius to suggest it should focus on its' two core assets - the Market Hill area and its^{sk} traditional artery for trade through the ages, the River Deben Estuary, still (just) one of the most beautiful little estuaries in Britain.

Ian Battye

Anni Healey Comments ...

I support the general tone of the above and would like to add that the Town Council's Amenities Committee are looking at ways of developing the Tide Mill area to reflect its importance as the pre-eminent waterside site in Woodbridge and to realise its tourist potential. It would improve the Quay, offer a river entry to the town and possibly some mooring facilities. In the context of harbours and river, 'space' can be as important a component as the buildings around it. This hurriedly agreed development now effectively prevents that option and a more creative use of this most sensitive site.

Committee Meeting Jottings

Sadly I have only managed to attend one Committee Meeting since the last Newsletter. However, in that time, there was the Annual General Meeting at which there was the opportunity to study the plans for the development of the Whisstocks' site, and Mr. John Marks explained them to the meeting, with some discussion following. This was followed by a talk on "The British Water Ski Federation" at which I was yet again introduced to "the fastest growing sport in the country". I think, by now, I have heard most sports described in this - incapable of verification - way. It was a little ironic that the audience, generally elderly, were being encouraged to take up this sport in their latter years. Finally we had an interesting talk from the National Rivers Authority in which their problems and those of the River Deben were discussed; this stimulating talk was followed by a barrage of thoughtful questions, all well answered by the speaker.

The subsequent Committee meeting started in a gloomy manner when it appeared that half pints were the order of the day and not the customary flowing tankard. Whether this was because it was anticipated to be a brief session and soon back to the telly, or whether the discussion was of sufficient import to require sober heads, I never discovered. However, the formal business was quickly dealt with, and we were soon on to A.O.B. Whisstocks site was the main theme and one of our members was soon in full flow using the familiar political subtlety of describing those District Councillors of opposing views as morons and cretins. The Felixstowe Ferry developments seemed even more complex than usual and since by now, all half pint glasses were empty, I missed most of the discussion whilst I took them to be refilled. There was some discussion about whether the Association should hold more social functions, but the majority feeling was against the idea.

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However, members may care to air their views at the Open General Meeting on October 7th.

Michael Atkins

Introducing Your Child To Sailing

So you want your child to sail? and being a loving caring parent you'll buy her a boat? Well I'm here to beg you NOT TO! We've all seen kids launched upon the sailing scene and it takes for many, but for a few it doesn't. It's not the child's fault, it's the parents' and usually the father's, and for somewhat the same reasons that so many wives bide at home whilst husbands are out enjoying themselves, the rotters, because they will over-face their nearest and dearest.

Instead acquire a sturdy stable rowboat, good swimmers age 7+ can learn a lot skylarking about and having watery picnics, also 'creeking' if you are near tidal water and can explore the inlets at HW. You won't see those kids going backwards in mid-channel when they do start to sail. Give them picnics and supervision to start with and they will get the first important notion, that the water is FUN and that they are the masters of it.

Next is to start them crewing in races for older children; find out where the nearest Cadet or Mirror squadron is, get the number of the adult in charge - crews are usually wanted aged 9 up. Do not patronise schools which fail to let out by lunchtime Saturday. There is nothing like learning to sail with your peers, and crewing for father in an adult boat does not compare. If she gets taken on as crew, request a 'controlled capsize' is carried out before the first race. This is with the boat tied to a buoy, and someone (you) rowing round. Your youngster can help right the boat and be whisked off in the row boat to a hot shower

and Mars bar in short order, and soon thereafter can be heard showing off about it. Somehow inversions, crew trapped in rigging, rudders floating off and other hazards follows Sods law and don't occur in a controlled situation.

Now your young hopeful is around 12, enrol for any course where there is a maximum of two beginners per Instructor per boat. Our club course at Waldringfield has this ratio, but few commercial courses do. Apart from learning to helm, she will learn a whole lot of stuff not demonstrated in Saturday racing; mooring, anchoring, reefing, coming along side the launch, gybing off the mud and much more. Speak to her instructor on the final day and get his views on the next stage. Now it is a case of a small boat (unless you have acquired an Optimist earlier) like a Challenger, Cadet, Mirror, Topper etc. Squeeze yourself in the front or better engage an experienced child. Start when the water is warmer (My eldest's first capsize was on 1 April and before wetsuits, it didn't happen with the others..) Don't think that now you can help them rig and shove off; you are more needed than ever but in a row boat at the waters edge with the child up tide - remember you may have someone else's little darling to look after too - if you aren't needed to upright them in Force 4 you will be needed to row them home in Force 1, and there will be another sailor in the family at last.

Rosemary Schlee
RYA Instructor

Editors Note.

The newsletter co-ordinator would like to apologise for the sexist tone of this article!

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Deben Reminiscences

It was in April 1954 that I made my first visit to the Deben, being brought by my young bride to find out what was so special about Suffolk. It was a wet and miserable day and the old bar at the Maybush was full of steaming bodies, Albert Hall dominated, and I puzzled over the turning arrow in the ceiling. Certainly I did not see Waldringfield at its best that day, but - no doubt - the subsequent visit in the summer left a different impression as I have been returning two or three times each year since then - that is until I finally retired here to enjoy the river all the year round.

Canon Waller can recall when there were no boats in the Ramsholt reach - but that was before my time. I was taken to the Ramsholt Arms when Mrs Nunn ran the pub, and was told that this was the best hostelry in the area. I was not entirely convinced of this as we were drinking in a passageway at the time, but subsequently the Arms became a focal point for days on the river. Several beers and cokes for the children still left one with change from a pound note. In those days, the hill opposite the pub was open to the public. Many happy picnic lunches were spent up there with great games of hide and seek in the bracken and nettles afterwards.

Bawdsey was another favourite spot with visits at low tide either by boat or by car. To our family, the shingle banks on the Bawdsey side leading to the bar were always known as WomPom Islands (after Flanders and Swan), and many happy hours were spent looking for WomPoms and their artefacts. The term WomPom became so much in daily use that I was eventually challenged by a lady who complained that she had searched through Ipswich library and could find no reference to WomPom Island! If the trip to Bawdsey was made by boat then a further journey to the Horse Sands in bathing costumes was compulsory. Invariably there was a cool sea breeze to

greet one, and the youngsters playtime was curtailed by the shivering adults who wanted to return to the shelter of Bawdsey.

Another very popular day trip was made to Bromeswell. The fleet would sail to Wilford Bridge when all would transfer to the dinghies and proceed by oars or motor. This had to be carefully timed to allow us to explore the upper reaches where kingfishers would lead us forward. The story was still being told of the occasion when Bob Garnham sailed his Firefly (?) above the bridge, and horrifically struck the overhanging electricity cables with the metal mast. What might have been a fatal accident was avoided by Bob and his crew jumping overboard. I have still to hear what happened to the mast.

We had purchased a ten foot sailing dinghy, Tortus, from Sir Lawrence Bragg and this proved an ideal adjunct for these trips. It also lived up to its name by taking the children single handed from one Tip to another. It gives me great pleasure to see her back on the beach at Waldringfield this year (looking smarter than she did when we owned her) having been missing for a decade or so. I hope that a future generation will have as much fun with her as we did. More ambitious sailing was provided by Fantee (Dragonfly No.2) which was sadly wrecked on the bar by her subsequent owner. My competitive sailing came when I purchased Moonmaiden (Enterprise 4010) from Colonel Hardy and for many years she and I competed in Deben Week when the Enterprise fleet consisted of 30 boats or more and provided exhilarating sailing. The three days of that week at the Ferry were always memorable, with entertaining companionship and exciting moments. More sedately, Moonmaiden, followed by a land based car party sailed up to Snape when it was possible to get her out of the water at Iken. Another similar trip was made to Mistley, up the Stour.

But most of the sailing was at Waldringfield

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where we soon learnt how to use the tide. Not so my mother who, on one famous occasion, was seen to be aground at the Tips on a falling tide whilst sailing single handed in her Firefly. An exhausting row against the tide, and a sledding over the mud, enabled us to reach her and bring her to safety. I think that we must have dropped an anchor for the Firefly and recovered the boat next day. Of course, all such adventures could be watched in great comfort from the Maybush garden, or from the urinal - what a pity that we have lost that wonderful men-only view - as could the high drama of Cadet Week when parents nails were bitten to the quick, and the cadets enjoyed themselves in a more relaxed manner. Son Jeremy succeeded in capsizing in all but one of the races in his first Cadet week and formed a close relationship with the rescue crew. But he must have learnt something as he since went on to achieve success in subsequent Deben Weeks and in other sailing.

Are you surprised that my wife and I retired to the banks of the Deben?

Michael Atkins

Bawdsey College

We are grateful to the River Deben Association for the chance to tell people around the river about what is happening at Bawdsey Manor. It is now operating as part of the SKOLA organisation which started English language courses in 1972 in central London. This has now grown to include, along with the original adult courses for 150 at any one time, a full-curriculum day school where more than 40 nationalities are represented each year. There is a nursery section and it goes right through to GCSE and A Level. We run courses at different levels in ELT (English Language Teaching) for about 300 trainees a year, and assist some of them to find teaching jobs abroad. We also have an educational publications

distribution service, a private transport service for students and a student accommodation service.

A residential school was also started in Old Harlow on the Herts/Essex border. The school was in a grade 1 listed twelfth century manor house with two ancient monuments in the grounds, an Anglo-Norman chapel and a deserted medieval village. In restoring these we gained much valuable experience adapting and improving such premises for residential educational purposes. This school, which has now moved to the Bawdsey College campus, was started by my wife and is called after her maiden name, 'Alexanders International School'. It has gained a considerable reputation in preparing youngsters from all parts of the world for entry to boarding and other schools in this country, and is inspected and recognised by the competent education authorities.

Our project at the former RAF Bawdsey is to establish a boarding school with good residential, sports and other extra-curricular facilities to meet the needs of young students who seek intensive tuition in English and which can also provide a full curriculum to GCSE level. The buildings formerly used as the NAAFI, the research laboratories and the original coach-house and stable yard will provide the living and teaching accommodation. Dining, library and certain other resources will be located in the Manor as soon as we can meet all the fire and other regulations.

Although we hope to open, at a modest level, in July, the Manor house, as a glorious example of Victorian architecture, is quite problematic. To meet all the planning requirements will take some time, but when ready, we plan to run English courses for students at tertiary level and teacher training courses there.

Our family has been closely linked with the Youth Hostels Association since 1940,

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owning hostels in the village of Nazeing in the Lea valley, and then at Netteswell Cross near the river Stort. We should like to continue this tradition at Bawdsey with the addition of a field study centre and a sports and environmental activities centre on the Deben, making full use of the wonderful resources of the area.

In particular, we are seeking support for the launching of the former RAF sailing club as Bawdsey Haven Yacht Club. We look forward to welcoming local involvement in the club's activities, especially by young people who might not otherwise have an opportunity to enjoy the Deben afloat. We plan to organise sailing courses under the auspices of the Royal Yachting Association. There are concerns about summer traffic congestion in the area of our quay, and the problem of children getting boats across the road to launch them from our slipway - we hope that everyone's activities can be organised in such a way as to allow the continuation of all reasonable uses which are in harmony with the quiet enjoyment of the area generally. While the public hearing about access earlier this year took place before we exchanged contracts, we are pleased to say we are in favour of continued public access on recognised routes. We are investigating the possibility of reviving the old dinghy park, as well as providing winter storage and maintenance facilities for larger boats.

It was with great concern that we heard of the possible demise of the present ferry service. We hope that the opening of our school will help to maintain the long standing connection between the Estate and the Ferrying tradition, of such value to residents and visitors alike. It is vital that competent authorities and appropriate bodies co-operate in the interests of preserving the ferry and the important link in the heritage coastal footpath.

We have been interested to find out about the bird-life on the estate, which has been

the subject of on-going migration studies co-ordinated by the British Trust for Ornithology. Over seven years, more than 60 species have been ringed, with a further 60 or so recorded, including great rarities. We look forward to the continuation of these activities and the involvement of our own students and local residents in them.

The Estate contains a site of Special Scientific Interest, namely the Red Crag cliff, dating from the Pleistocene era. We are planning to combat the ravages of rabbits, the North sea and over-enthusiastic amateur geologists! We are fortunate in having an 8-person Suffolk County Council employment training team helping with the restoration of the grounds, including the unique and enchanting Victorian Cliff Walk.

Last summers concert to celebrate the centenary of the composer Roger Quilter's birth will, we expect, stimulate similar events. We look forward to welcoming visitors at such events and Open Days in future. Currently, we are hosts to Anglia TV, who are filming a P. D. James murder/mystery here, a most interesting experience. Meanwhile, we are happy to answer any points of interest to local residents.

In the past we have enjoyed frequent stays at Walberswick, lunches at the Oysterage in Orford and walks on the marshes before concerts at Snape. Such Suffolk excursions have always been anticipated and recalled by the family as a special treat..... and the Deben, of incomparable character. What better place to set such a project? and to share it with students from all parts of the world.

Niels Toettcher
Director

Calling all AUTHORS

DO YOU WANT TO TRY YOUR SKILLS AT WRITING ARTICLES?

We would like to offer you the chance to help put together a newsletter. Practise :-

- ⊗ writing on important issues with maximum impact.
- ⊗ using graphics, headlines etc. to **emphasise** a point.
- ⊗ stretching your ingenuity with articles, story ideas and balance features.

The River Deben Association Committee would like to invite

👉 YOU 👈

to assist with the production of this newsletter.

Contact Michael Atkins if interested.

News letter
David Stinson
Robert Sumpter
Francis Natherton

Frank's application
whistle's yard
Town hall (public footpaths)
Woodbridge Cruising Club jetty
Sand pit (How high is the sand)
Beaulosey Barron
Dredging at Kings fleet
Footpaths / bridges

Your Article Could

Have

Appeared Here

**RIVER
DEBEN
ASSOCIATION
Open Meeting**

Woodbridge Community Hall

Friday October 7th 1994 at 7.30pm

Everyone Welcome

There will be an open discussion on matters concerning the River Deben.

Followed by

Mr Keith Turner

National Trust Countryside Manager, who will give a talk entitled

**Countryside Management in the Suffolk
Coastal Area**