

River Deben Association News Letter - Autumn 1996



Number 13

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Compilation : Tim Midwinter

Contents

Chairman's Comment	1
Editorial	2
Association Business	3
Forthcoming Events	3
Litter Clearance	3
Who's Who	4
Officers	4
Committee Members	4
Reports	5
The Open Meeting	5
The Woodbridge Ferry	5
Articles	7
Clytie	7
Waldringfield Sailing Club	8
The Wet Weekend	10
- Have you seen the pink flamingos	10
- Recipe for a wet weekend	10
- Thoughts of an organiser	11
Pre-war reminiscences of the Deben ...	11
River Jottings	14



Chairman's Comment

The less frequented way seldom disappoints. When my family found Woodbridge in the early 60s, it was an easy choice against Solent and Chichester Harbour locations for a home. The Suffolk coast had, and still has, unmatched vastness and opportunities to enjoy wild natural

solitude. My first experiences of the Deben were from a Firefly, racing in the DYC Handicap Class, often with Tommy Atkins ahead in his National 12 and, in strong winds, the diminutive Gyp Atkins behind in her Firefly. On a good day, the turn out would have been half a dozen dinghies, two or three Kingfishers and, occasionally, a few small yachts. At a guess, the Deben's boat population, of all kinds, was less than a fifth of the number today. There were no canoeists or rowing skiffs, few fast outboard motors, and no catamarans, wind surfers or jet-skis. Then, as now, the Sullivan Cup took us down to the old Horse Buoy (of cathedral size) and, race positions established, we came back up with the tide with the same quiet enjoyment of the river that the large majority of river users, including walkers and bird-watchers, seek today.

Now there is an increasing rate of change, some elements of which are barely compatible. Nearby housing developments will certainly add to the pressures on the river. It is a logically democratic step for the River Deben Association, open to all, to reconcile interests and represent the wishes of a strong body of members to the authorities. We may also need to educate those who are new to our river. Measures for environmental protection are well articulated and International Regulations apply when we are afloat, but we do need a more homely reminder of correct behaviour and I am pleased that your Committee has the publication of some sort of Code of Practice in hand. My personal plea to boat owners under power is to use intelligent foresight and the throttle rather than the rudder to avoid collisions, thus avoiding unseamanlike swerves and frayed tempers.

At the moment the Association has 600 members represented by an active Committee: we need more members, not of course for their nominal subscriptions, but to empower our lobby. Wherever I go on

River Deben Association News Letter - Autumn 1996

the shores of the River Deben, in Clubs, pubs, boatyards and homes, I find respect and goodwill for the work done so far and for the way in which it has been accomplished. This reflects great credit on my predecessors. Now, with the granting of RAMSAR bird protection status to our marshes and with local Councils seeking to enact bylaws to regulate and protect river users, we may be entering a new phase of arbitration.

If you have friends who have not yet joined the Association, please recruit them. The eyes and ears of members enable the Committee to be kept well-informed. The Committee are only a phone call away. We also need your views to assist the formulation of balanced reactions to plans and problems. There is always plenty of room at our AGMs and Open Meetings with ample time to meet each other. Our aim is to respond actively to information and comments from members within the terms of our charter: please make an active contribution to the task of keeping the River Deben an unspoilt and happy place.

Denzil Cowdry
Chairman

Editorial

I shall be away when the Compiler prints this edition, and therefore I will have no control on whether the Editorial comes before the Chairman's Comments or afterwards. I can only await my fate.

It is a pleasure to welcome Denzil Cowdry as our new Chairman. Many tides have flowed under Denzil's boats in the River Deben, first in an *Enterprise*, more recently in a *Squib* and also, doing his duties as a Grandfather, in a *Mirror*. A member of *Waldringfield Sailing Club*, and - until recently - Treasurer of the *Deben Yacht Club*, he is known to many users of the river. Until retirement, he was not a very

active member of the River Deben Association, but since taking office, he has given a new and revitalising touch to our meetings and plans. There is no doubt that the Association will flourish under his care.

Anthony Mason relinquished the chair after giving us invaluable guidance and leadership. He is the first Chairman to complete his statutory three years in office, and he has been very conscientious in vigorously pursuing matters that the Association has had to deal with. In particular, we must thank him for taking action (with some success) to arrest the erosion at the Rocks. We are fortunate to have his help still available to us on the Committee, and his work as Chairman of the exploratory committee on setting up the Maritime Heritage Trust is something that has the full backing of the Committee.

Some members may be puzzled why we had to look outside the Committee for our new chairman. I was the nigger in the wood pile because as vice-Chairman, I was "next in succession". But I was also Editor of this Newsletter, and I did not think that it was wise for the Chairman also to be Editor. I do enjoy doing the editorial work, and it appeared that it was going to be easier to find a new Chairman than a new Editor. For the time being, I remain as vice-Chairman, available to help our new Chairman.

The new addition to our Committee is equally significant. We welcome Jo Masters to our meetings, and she is already proving her worth. As great granddaughter of Sir Clifford Paterson, the founder of *Waldringfield Sailing Club*, she has a long association with the river, and that association takes a tangible form in the yacht *Clytie* which was built for Sir Clifford 74 years ago, and has now been refurbished by Jo and her husband and is to be seen sailing the river proudly. It was a memorable moment when *Clytie* joined the *Waldringfield Sailing Club "Sail Past"* in

River Deben Association News Letter - Autumn 1996

celebration of their 75th anniversary. You will find in this Newsletter Jo's fascinating digest of Clytie's log in the early years.

It is always pleasant to welcome new members to our Committee, but sad to say good-bye to others. Russell Geen was brought onto the Committee in 1991 as our Liaison Officer with Suffolk Coastal District Council. His knowledge of who to go to, and how to pressurise has been invaluable, and we shall miss him. Thank you Russell for all your good work.

You will also find an article about Waldringfield Sailing Club. This is the second of the articles about the sailing Clubs on the river, and I am hoping to publish similar items from Deben Yacht Club, and Felixstowe Ferry Sailing Club in future editions - as well as articles about the work of the several Fairway Committees. Possibly it is because I find the social history of the River Deben fascinating that we never seem to be short of 'Reminiscences' and other historical matters. I hope our readers enjoy them as much as I do. Fortunately there is also a good collection of articles about what is happening on the river today. It is my hope that some of the more controversial articles

published here may provoke letters which I can publish in the Newsletter. I am sure that not everyone agrees with some of the views expressed. The published Aim of the Association is to "represent and reconcile the interests of all concerned with the future of the River Deben and its environs", and the Newsletter is one of the ways by which we can know and publicise other members' views.

I would echo the Chairman's plea for as wide a membership as possible. We did start a mini recruitment campaign a few months ago, and the Treasurer informs me that this has resulted in 15 new single members, 20 new couples and 1 new club. I think that we should be aiming for a thousand members.

Finally a personal plea. There are often complaints about how crowded the river is with the long stretches of moorings. I do get upset when I find that a yacht owner has taken his boat for a sail, and left his dinghy on an inordinately long painter attached to his mooring - thereby restricting the options available to those sailing through the anchorage. Why do the painters have to be so long?

Association Business

Forthcoming Events

Friday, 18 October 1996

Open Meeting, Woodbridge Community Hall 19.30. There will be a talk on 'Water quality in the River Deben' by a speaker from the National Rivers Authority, Environment Agency.

Sunday, 20 October 1996

Litter Clearance Day.

Saturday, 22 February 1997

Copy Day for the 14th edition of the Newsletter.

Friday, 18 April 1997

River Deben Association A.G.M.

August 2nd - 9th 1997 (Provisional)

Deben Week

Litter Clearance

This is being run this year jointly by Jo Masters and David Cavey. New helpers are required. Volunteers should ring Jo Masters on (01394)383825

River Deben Association News Letter - Autumn 1996

Who's Who

Officers

Chairman	Denzil Cowdry. St. Edmundsbury, 10 Ipswich Rd, Wdge. IP12 4BU	☎ 01394 383625
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
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
Litter	David Cavey. 10 Crown Place, Woodbridge Jo Masters, 49 Riverview Rd, Melton, Wdge.	☎ 01394 387099 ☎ 01394 383825
Wildfowlers	Adrian Judge. 29 Bredfield St, Wdge. IP12 4NH	☎ 01394 383350
Watersports	Tim Midwinter. 37 Coopers Rd, Martlesham Heath. Ipswich. IP5 7SJ	☎ 01473 623020
Water-Ski Club	Steve James. 1 The Courts, Church Lane, Playford. IP6 9DR	☎ 01473 624683
General Liaison	Ian Battye. Upson Cottage, 8 Crown Place Wdge IP12 1BN	☎ 01394 382338
SCDC Liaison	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
	Anthony Mason. 29 Ipswich Rd, Wdge. IP12 4BS	☎ 01394 386601

Reports

The Open Meeting

Time has been allotted in the programme for the Open Meeting on Friday, October 18th (Community Centre, Woodbridge - 7.30 p.m.) for an address by a speaker from the National Rivers Authority. The NRA have developed a computer model for their sampling of the River Deben, and the first results of this exercise should be available in time for the meeting. When the Chairman spoke to John Daniels, the officer responsible for matters affecting the Deben, the latter described our estuary as a "showpiece". The talk will provide reassurance about the care with which sampling and analysis is undertaken, as well as an opportunity to question an expert.

The Woodbridge Ferry

Following the article on the Woodbridge Ferry, Ian Battye took notes at a meeting with Frank and Christine Knights, and produced this article to bring us up to date. We are very grateful to them all for completing this record of a vital part of Deben history - Editor.

The Ferry, whose recorded history started in 1509, was always an ancient franchise ferry. Its modern history started in 1883 when John Cobbold of the famous brewing firm was admitted "tenant" of the Ferry, as he owned the Boat Inn and the Ferry went with it. This continued until the end of the first world war when John Cobbold offered the Ferry to the Woodbridge Urban District Council. They accepted and it was conveyed freehold to them in 1919, and Dick Elvin operated it from 1920 for 27 years on their behalf. At this time, Frank Knights and Roy Chittock were in partnership running two boats for river trips - the Duke and Duchess, and they carried on the Ferry when Dick retired in 1947.

They re-opened the Ferry by getting Claud Whisstock to install a 1½ HP Stuart engine in a rowing boat, and, for low water, a shallow draught punt plus an old council lighter moored on the far shore which was a great boon in extending the hours (7 a.m. - 9 p.m.)

When the weather was fine, trade was brisk with people just wanting to walk or visit. The legal requirement was a contract for taking schoolchildren so that they could walk to New Street Primary School from the Sutton area; the postman twice daily and telegraph boys when required. 364½ days a year with only Christmas afternoon off! Alan Dale (still going strong) was employed by the partnership to run the ferry during the week so that Frank could build up his boat business, and Roy could continue his work for Potters - and they shared weekends.

At weekends by popular request, Frank ran a private enterprise trip for Ernie Collins and others (ex R.N. P.T.I. and nicknamed Sheriff), brother of the late George Collins, Harbourmaster at Ramsholt. He was Gamekeeper to Sir Anthony Quilter and lived at Gamekeeper's Cottage, Methersgate Quay. One evening, coming over, Roy advised a large lady not to step on Whisstocks slipway. Nevertheless she did, slipped, fell in the mud and, with help, got to her feet and then soundly boxed Roy's ears! After some three years, as Frank's business had taken off and they found that ferry passengers were declining due to increased bus services and car ownership, the partnership decided to hand the Ferry back to the W.U.D.C.

The W.U.D.C. then had a member of their own staff to run the Ferry. First "Didder" Green for a year or two, followed by his brother Peter Green. There were several attempts by the W.U.D.C. to close the

River Deben Association News Letter - Autumn 1996

Ferry because of the financial burden on the Council. Mr. H.P. Pelly of Haddon Hall instituted legal action to keep it open because of the ancient rights and hardship to the local inhabitants who had to make a large 8 mile detour. The action went for trial at Ipswich Assizes in January 1951 before Mr. Justice Parker. After further acrimonious discussion, the case was adjourned to London in May 1951 when, in the High Court, Mr. Justice Parker gave judgement for Mr. Pelly. As a matter of interest, Frank Knights was subpoenaed to give evidence. The Urban Council still objected, and proposed a private Bill to Parliament for abolition of the Ferry. This was finally killed at a public meeting in Woodbridge in January 1952. Thus in April 1952, the Urban Council gave a public undertaking to maintain the Ferry as far as possible until further notice.

Soon after, at the request of the W.U.D.C., Frank again took on the Ferry and employed Roy Buller, who lived in a houseboat at the Ferry Quay, to run it, and then employed Roy Holland, but not for long as he broke his back. The Urban Council then employed George Skinner. George had retired from a job with the Ipswich Dock Commission, and took over the job for some years. He was a member of the barge owning family of Woodbridge (Dover Castle, Nautilus, Tuesday), but he was not the best ambassador for the Ferry, on occasions advising customers to take a bus. As time went on, usage of the ferry declined, and in the mid sixties Christine Knights found George collapsed with a stroke. He did not return to work.

So, once again, Frank was asked to take on the ferry operation for which a small subsidy was agreed. He continued doing this until the mid seventies when it was finally closed. In fact, in 1974, on local

government reorganisation, the Ferry was transferred to Suffolk Coastal District Council, and Frank continued running it until he woke up to the fact that, with the changeover of Councils, his subsidy was no longer being paid. The new owner feigned ignorance, which surprised Frank then but not now. Anyhow they did square the account.

Just as he and Christine had ferried schoolchildren across in various periods of the mid fifties on behalf of the County Council, they continued, on special occasions, to help private parties who gave donations to charities. This summer, they carried a party of 90 Rotarians. For over 15 years, a party of some 20-25 young pilgrims from Essex and east London has assembled at Essex University, near Colchester, with a large wooden cross. Visiting various churches, they arrive at Felixstowe on the Saturday evening before Palm Sunday, crossing over the Deben at Felixstowe Ferry early on the Sunday morning. Travelling along roads and footpaths, they are ferried over by Christine and Frank Knights, and met by the Rector. He leads the procession up Quay Street and Church Street to St. Mary's for a Service (buckets for cleaning muddy boots are provided outside the church), and they are fed and bedded at St. Mary's Church House that night. On Monday, they continue on their way visiting various churches so as to arrive on Easter Sunday at Walsingham - one of many parties who have made similar journeys from various parts of the U.K. Walsingham is now a major centre of pilgrimage at Easter.

A final note, it is good to see Duchess II operated by Phil Hayward in conjunction with Frank Knights giving much pleasure to visitors with local river trips.

Ian Battye

Articles

Clytie

April 1st, 1926

"Hurrah ! Here we are again, as jolly a set of April fools as ever set foot on salt water! The winter has gone, and the sailing season has commenced. Clifford, Gray, Jo and I left home at 6.30 to catch the usual 8.15 train from Liverpool St. Arrived at Woodbridge, we did final shopping and then Bertie Everson took us down in the launch to the Clytie which was lying below Troublesome. The day was sunny and fresh with a light SW breeze, and with a heavy tide against us, our progress was somewhat slow. We anchored near the jetty and at once set to work to refurnish the boat. Load after load was dumped aboard but gradually order was evolved out of the chaos of mattresses, pots, pans, crockery, bales of blankets and sheets, pillows, cushions, linen, clothes, oilies, cordage, food etc. and by 5 o'clock we were once more fairly straight and very ready to settle down quietly to tea - the first quiet and respectable meal of the day. Afterwards we went up to Windyridge (Waldringfield) where we found the whole party in a riotously hilarious and holiday mood. Then back to Clytie and bed."

Seventy years ago, my great grandmother wrote this in the ship's log, started in 1922 when Clytie was launched, and kept up until the outbreak of World War II.

The family, Clifford, Daisy and three children were keen sailors, and would brave the elements, not necessarily sailing great distances but enjoying being on the river.

June 30th, 1928

"A typical Deben day, the morning calm clear and sunny and the bathing was very good".

April 6th, 1928.

"It was 11 o'clock before we set sail with light southerly breeze and rising tide. We

beat down nearly to Ramsholt and then turned round and ran back to Kyson. Dinner was ready by the time we had anchored - beef steak and kidney pudding and chips - and we were quite ready for it. In the afternoon, we walked along the wall to Martlesham woods and back, and we set sail about 4.30, but just below the Horse Beacon we went on the mud on the Waldringfield side. Kedging and rocking were tried in vain, so we got tea ready and had it, and then all rowed down to Waldringfield where we visited Broomfield and Windyridge, and now have just returned to Clytie. After a lovely midnight row, she is afloat again and we hope to get down to Waldringfield in time for breakfast. It is a wonderful night and looks well for tomorrow."

They certainly did eat well, so much so that she became known as the food boat.

August 7th, 1927

"Mr. Prentice came over to breakfast, then all our party went to church and returned to the Clytie for roast beef, baked potatoes, runner beans and summer pudding."

It was Sunday, after all! The preparations sometimes made up an evening's entertainment.

May 23rd, 1932

"After supper we had an orgy of cooking sausages, preparing a fowl (8 lb.), making ready a braised dish, making a sponge cake pudding, a souflee and a blancmange".

They were expecting five guests for dinner the following evening. However, they did let up sometimes when they were

"both on a severe diet so our elaborate cooking technique is, for the time being, in abeyance".

They were religious in their taking of

River Deben Association News Letter - Autumn 1996

bathes.

April 16th, 1927

"A lovely morning but wind and water were very cold and there was much groaning on the part of the bathers".

Often they had a "chilly but jolly bathe!"

August 21st, 1933

In 1932 the summer holiday was hot and they had "a perfect bathe which we enjoyed in leisurely fashion. We finished the evening with a glorious bathe in the moonlight at 11 p.m."

They were also religious in their church-going, finding a nearby church most Sundays.

April 16th, 1933

"We walked to our favourite Felixstowe church via the beach and took the bus back."

Occasionally this happened.

August 21st, 1932

"After breakfast we slowly drifted to Waldringfield where the boys and I (Clifford) went to church but found no service".

Very occasionally

June 13th, 1932

"We all felt that a day at sea would do us even more good than a church service."

They had their mishaps.

April 7th, 1928

"We had a busy sail down with a heavy east wind and when trying to hook the buoy Graham managed to give Clifford a shove and he went overboard, though managing to hold on with one hand. Gray, in the hurry of the moment, tripped over a rope and also went overboard, but providence, watching over us, kindly ordained that the buoy rope should be caught and held in the fairlead. Clifford and Gray both swung themselves up on deck, dripping and shivering."

July 31st, 1927

Another time they put the remains of "a very fine stew" on the cabin hatch to cool.

During operations in the cockpit after lunch "it started to rain and Graham, in an excess of zeal while descending the companion, pulled the sliding hatch over and received a good portion of the stew over his head and shoulders. What didn't get absorbed by his hair ran off him into the cabin - a nasty mess."

I wonder how different the river and its banks are now?

March 26th, 1932

"After laying up (on a mooring) we rowed over to the east shore and walked along the foreshore. The sea has fairly got the better of the land and the majority of the cliff is being rapidly eroded. All the shingle has gone and there seems nothing to stop the sea."

It must have been lovely sailing on the river without nearly so many boats - a time we cannot easily repeat. Their holidays were real escapism from their hectic London life.

March 28th, 1932

"It was a good meal too - fried liver and bacon, potatoes and leeks, pudding and fruit - after which we retired to our snug beds and listened to the rain beating on the cabin roof and heard the howling of the wind and felt the rocking of the waves, and went to sleep with a feeling of pity for all poor landlubbers who had to sleep in mere beds on dry land."

August 17th, 1932

"Home is very pleasant and very charming after life aboard, delightful as that always is."

Jo Masters.

Waldringfield Sailing Club

In 1963, National Benzole produced a book called "Sailing Tours in Essex and Suffolk". The map of the section of the Deben from Woodbridge to Ramsholt bears the legend "Waldringfield csrfgw*", so not a lot has changed in the last thirty-

River Deben Association News Letter - Autumn 1996

something years. The text says:

"As you come down to Waldringfield village the channel, marked by buoys, comes over to the right bank. You can land almost anywhere on the shingle shore and the road curves down to the river's edge. The Maybush Inn is very handy, and there are a few shops and a post office".

Even allowing for the writer's exaggeration, that description scarcely does justice to Waldringfield, one of the most attractive settings on one of the most beautiful rivers in the country, where the Sailing Club has nestled under the cliffs, more or less on the same spot since its birth. That took place in 1921, making this our 75th anniversary year. The village itself grew on the outside of a gentle sweep in the river, and a steep sandy beach developed where the tide cut into the crag. A quay was built, and agriculture and other trades blossomed. Barges with hay and straw ran up to the Thames to supply the capital's population. It is well known that what goes up must come down, so you can guess what filled the barges on the return journey! The cement works developed, and it is said that bricks (Suffolk Whites) were collected from a local creek, eventually finding their way to the United States, via London, to build the White House.

The Sailing Club has survived and prospered on a strictly self-help basis, and over the years has made do with a variety of ever larger huts for accommodation. However, during the last fifteen years, a major two storey rebuild has taken place. The Club has always been successful in attracting new members, and we have been fortunate to have active people to fill flag officer, safety, race officer and galley duties.

There is a strong emphasis on racing. Classes include Squibs, Wayfarers, Larks, OKs and a very active and successful International Cadet fleet. Class members

regularly represent their country at World Championships. The racing programme runs from the end of March through until the end of November, with Spring, Summer, Autumn and Wednesday evening Series, supplemented by Open Events at Easter (Easter Egg) and September (Cartoon).

In the summer, we combine with Deben Yacht Club and Felixstowe Ferry Sailing Club to run Deben Week, which is itself building up to its 50th anniversary. The week starts on the Saturday (this year it was 10th August) with shore events at Waldringfield, a happy afternoon for all ages. Racing on the Sunday is followed by a "dressed overall" cruise from Ramsholt to Waldringfield where the Revd. John Waller conducts the traditional Yachtsmen's Service from the water, and racing then follows throughout the week at Woodbridge, Felixstowe Ferry and back to Waldringfield.

We also boast a large Yacht Class, very active both in cruising (the recently introduced but now annual cruise to London is very well supported - even the Editor was there this year) and in socialising (some of us did that in London as well).

Training is an important feature of our calendar. Each year we run sailing and racing courses and seminars for race officers, and we occasionally have courses for safety boat drivers and VHF radio operators. There is major training activity, more or less throughout the year, for our international Cadet Squadron members, who also compete at Alton Water in their autumn and winter series. Very well attended are our Sail Taster Days - an opportunity for those (non-members and adults as well as members and children) who have never been in a dinghy to see whether they like it, and decide whether they want to try it again.

A major new venture has been support of

River Deben Association News Letter - Autumn 1996

East Anglian Sailing and the RYA Sailability Scheme in their efforts to provide National Squib keelboats suitably adapted for use by disabled people wishing to experience and enjoy sailing. Nigel Pusey, who wrote most of this article, set off from Waldringfield to sail his own Squib single-handed to Dublin for the Squib National Championships, to raise money through Waldringfield and other Sailing Clubs. Due mainly to adverse weather conditions, he only made it to Plymouth, but raised over £2000 through this Club.

The season is littered with social events, and we sell eggy baps throughout the sailing world. Come and try us!

Oh, we nearly forgot: c = yacht or sailing clubs, s = stores and shops, r = repairs, f = fuel, g = garage, w = fresh water available, and * = pubs.

Nigel Pusey and Tom Auber

The Wet Weekend

- Have you seen the pink flamingos

No, I haven't had one Pimms too many and despite the humorous comments made when I reported the sighting, the existence of two pink flamingos, busily feeding near Green Point on the River Deben, was confirmed later in the day.

Whilst taking part in the Wet Weekend (5/7 July 1996) organised by the Scouts and Guides Association, we (owners of Stargazer) and crew of four Scouts were heading towards Felixstowe Ferry when Johnny, sharp eyed Scout, casually mentioned the flamingos. We all looked disbelievingly, in the direction of his pointing finger. Sure enough, there they were, quite oblivious to our approaching yacht. Binoculars were passed round to enable a better view.

Where had they come from? Had we seen any flamingos before? What were they feeding on? Keen interest was shown by our

crew.

As mentioned, our sighting was met with disbelief and comments about "one too many" and "green dragons" were made accompanied by wry grins. However several other sailors, similarly involved in the Wet Weekend confirmed the birds' existence.

Has anyone seen these lovely birds and do you have any idea where they have come from?

Liz Lord

(I would be glad to publish any other facts about the flamingos, and any answers to the questions that Liz Lord poses - Editor)

- Recipe for a wet weekend

TAKE

- Generous quantities of Commitment, Organisation and Enthusiasm
- Mix well with elements of Knowledge and Expertise, Patience and Humour, care and a little bit of luck
- Add large numbers of Scouts and Guides
- Sprinkle generously with showers
- Cover scantily with sunshine
- Serve on the beautiful River Deben
- Set the timer at 1800 hrs on Friday, 5th July 1996
- Switch off at 1530 on Sunday, 7th July 1996

RESULT

A first class, highly commendable weekend.

The weekend in question was organised by the Suffolk Scouts and Guides to enable girls and boys to sample and learn about as many boating activities as possible.

Using Ramsholt as a base, participants were

River Deben Association News Letter - Autumn 1996

able to experience canoeing, dinghy sailing, paddling in Dragon Boats and sailing in yachts. Working to a strict programme, everyone was given the opportunity to 'have a go' at everything on offer. Assisted by an efficient water taxi service, 'crews' of Scouts and Guides were ferried to the waiting yachts. Dinghy sailors were carefully watched over by the rescue boats. Canoeists were put through their paces by experienced tutors. The whole proceedings resounded to the rhythmic thud of the Dragon Boat drums and the loud commands of the helmsmen.

Despite a cold wind and frequent showers on Saturday, lively interest and enthusiasm were the order of the day. Appetites sharpened, the Scouts and Guides returned to camp for their evening meal, ably provided by Troop Leaders and helpers. The day's programme was rounded off by energetic, boisterous camp activities.

Sunday dawned bright and warmer and those who wished could sample the water activities again or take part in a land activity at the camp site. After the midday meal, it was time for the Scouts and Guides to change into uniform for the Flag Down ceremony. Then it was down with the tents and depart for home.

Scout and Guide Troops came from all over Suffolk to enjoy the weekend and sample the delights of the River Deben. Congratulations to the Leaders, helpers and volunteers for providing a very successful, worthwhile weekend.

Liz Lord

- Thoughts of an organiser

Apart from luck, the organisation was greatly assisted by the tremendous help from friendly River Deben folk. From the landowners who gave us a camp site and access to the river, businesses who lent boats, to the Harbour Master with moorings

and valuable advice. But especially those owners of boats on the river (one or two from the Alde) who brought their boats and gave their time to show their young crews the ropes and did not complain too much about the mud and sand deposited on their immaculate decks. All these kind people who helped this organiser departed varying from "not again" to "perhaps next year".

The above is all positive, but under my R.D.A. hat, there are negative thoughts. Over 250 people were involved in the weekend (including leaders, instructors, boat owners and helms), with 30 yachts and dinghies and 50 canoes. Inevitably there was some congestion at Ramsholt as we loaded and we filled the beach at The Rocks for lunch. So apologies if we disturbed any R.D.A. members. The purpose of the weekend was to introduce 150 youngsters to water activities. But suppose many of them want to renew the acquaintance? Will there be places for them to launch canoes or park dinghies? Will there be moorings for their yachts, or indeed will they be able to afford a mooring? We would all hope that our children and grandchildren could enjoy the river as much as we have done. Personally I like to share my enjoyment with other people's children, but this does add to the pressures on the very thing we enjoy. I regard the River Deben Association's task to be to balance all interests, large and small, so as not to destroy the essential nature of the river for trade, for leisure and for wildlife. Difficult but with the goodwill mentioned above, not impossible.

David White

Pre-war reminiscences of the Deben

I suppose it would be about 1929 when I was first introduced to the Deben. This was during the construction of houses in Waldringfield into which my grandfather

River Deben Association News Letter - Autumn 1996

and his daughter, my mother and our family moved in 1930, following the death of my father. Early recollections are of the road to Waldringfield, which from the Chapel cross roads was nothing more than a track. The river itself was, as far as I can remember, basically the same although there was a lot more deep water and a channel to the back of the island off Stonner Quay. I had two special friends at the time. They were Hamish Fraser who visited from London for holidays and weekends, and Adrian Heath (Copper Heath) who lived in The Maltings, his father being in the R.A.F. stationed at Martlesham Heath, which was a going concern at that time.

We spent a good deal of our time on the river in a clinker built 8 ft. pram dinghy. I remember we used to rig sails in the rowlock holes and sail happily down wind, providing it was gale force. The Tips and the Rocks were our favourite places to land. The Tips were twice as long then and there was a lot less beach at the Rocks. Erosion to both has made a huge difference over the years.

Waldringfield had its characters around at the time, I remember, particularly Bob Button who lived in the cement cottages. He was an ex Naval C.P.O., and if you joined his 'Club', you had to be able to produce a shilling, a piece of string and a knife. Whenever you saw Bob, you quickly checked that you had the necessary. If not, you took to the nearest hiding place at the double, or it cost you a fine of two pence. Bob's wife who was totally deaf, would stand at her front door and yell her greetings very loudly to passers by.

George Turner, my uncle, was landlord of the Maybush. We used to go there for Christmas dinner, the pub being closed for the day by the time we sat down to our meal. Jimmy Quantrill, my maternal grandfather, was mostly on the beach by his hut or in the Maybush when not at home. He was always there to "lend a hand" and

operated trips on the river in his motor boat "Barbara". His passengers would embark and disembark via a wheeled landing stage which had to be pushed to the boat on each occasion. At the Ferry, we had Charlie Brinkley and all the other Brinkleys. Billy Newson had a pleasure boat called Deben Viking which used to come up river with passengers from the Ferry. These would land at Waldringfield and have tea before returning to the Ferry. I believe he also had Orwell Viking which took passengers round to and up the Orwell. Corky Edmunds was another character from the Ferry. He would sail in all the racing even though he had an artificial leg - hence Corky.

We did not have Deben week in those days. Each club had its own Regatta. We particularly looked forward to the Ferry Regatta. There used to be a fair there, situated on the green in front of the Ferry Boat where we enjoyed all the fun of the fair. There always used to be a knock-out tug of war between the police, the R.A.F., and the sailors represented by the crews of the Regatta competing boats. The former would turn up in full tug of war kit. The sailors were often in bare feet, and my memory tells me that the sailors won on occasions to the satisfaction of all the sailing clubs. The winners won a barrel of beer provided by the landlord of the Ferry Boat Inn. Waldringfield Regatta consisted of shore events and sailing, in some ways rather different from today. There was always a Greasy Pole, usually on the Quay and tilting and pram paddling races were variations that we do not see today. The rowing and swimming races were always held, and the shovel race always with the proper malt shovels as used in the Maltings at the time. I don't remember a cork hunt. The shore events were organised by a Mr. H.E. Booth. The sailing races were a problem for the handicappers. Jimmy Quantrill was in the forefront both in preparing the handicaps and sailing the races!! There was no Portsmouth Yardstick,

River Deben Association News Letter - Autumn 1996

so the handicaps were set prior to each race based on wind and tide conditions on the day and on past performances.

The boats were varied yachts and included "Prudence" belonging to a Mr. Wickman which was invariably scratch, and "One More" owned and sailed by Cyril Stollery, and "Two More" owned and sailed by Ernie Nunn who, with his brother Harry, had the Waldringfield boatyard. Harry was an original Secretary of the Waldringfield & Hemley Sailing Club when it was formed in 1921. There was also the St. class of boats - "St. David", "St. Patrick" and "St George" owned and sailed by Cyril Stollery, Miss Winn from Aldeburgh, Mr. George and Bob Garnham, although I may not have the right owners with the right boats. They were open boats, half decked; St. Patrick was painted green, St. George white and St. David might have been red.

The dinghy "classes" were very varied and all built of timber. There was Bob Garnham's "Sally", 10ft 6in, clinker built; I sailed Ed Barker's "Rover" 10ft, again clinker built half deck with bowsprit and jib. There were 12ft Nationals, "Cain" and "Able", and, of course, Cyril Stollery's "Itch" which, with Kenneth Palmer as crew went off and won the Burton Cup. There was also the 14 ft moulded ply EOS sailed by Mrs. Spear, and a clinker built 14 ft sailed by Mr. Thomas.

I remember sailing in a mixed handicap yacht race in a Thames Estuary class one design called "Joy" with Jimmy Quantrill at the helm, and we may well have won. The boat was owned by a Mr. Wilson, who was, I believe, editor of the East Anglian Daily Times. Jimmy also brought to Waldringfield a boat which was a "one off" design. She was very heavy and built rather like an oval saucer with a huge steel centre board which, when raised, showed above the gunwale rather like the neck of a black swan. The boat was called "Adlam" and won a good many races for Jimmy. In due

course, an offer was made, and Adlam was sold to be renamed "Clio" -and thereafter, Clio never did as well as Adlam had.

My recollections of Woodbridge are limited; after all it was a bike ride away! However, I remember that at the Riverside by Robertson's yard, there was a salt water swimming pool - probably the only swimming pool in Woodbridge, and I swam in it many times. With the Waldringfield village school, we were also taught to swim in the Deben at Waldringfield by the Reverend Wontnor, who was the vicar of Newbourne before it was combined with Waldringfield and Hemley. Harry Nunn was apprenticed at Everson's boatyard. Harry lived at Church Farm at the time, and he walked to Woodbridge and back along the river wall each day. I remember the Cherub yachts at Woodbridge. Mr. Curjel owned one, and amongst the others, there was "Sea Pig" which had a port hole in the bow. They were carvel built and gaff rigged. Woodbridge Regatta was, in those days, similar to the Waldringfield Regatta with perhaps more shore events. It used to be great to have three regattas on the Deben during the summer holidays. Now the Woodbridge Regatta has become the Town Regatta and is still on similar lines to those of years ago.

The Deben had a good supply of fish in those days. Probably the most dedicated of fisherman were Doctor Jimson and Shaver Mills who fished from the Marietta. Shaver originated from Tollesbury and had fished practically all his life. If you asked him when to fish, he would say "while they are feeding", and that would always be either just before you started or just after you packed up! Shaver was said to have caught 99 bass in one haul at the Tips, using trammel nets and jingling or bumping. He would set his nets at the top of the tide, put cut straw on the water, row round and jingle chain in the water or pump with a special tool to frighten the fish toward the

River Deben Association News Letter - Autumn 1996

net. The straw prevented the fish from jumping over the net. Jimmy Quantrill also fished and used to sell his catch. I remember going round the village selling fish; there would be 12 fish strung on a string through the gills and they would sell for one shilling. We also collected winkles, cooked and sold for 6d per pint. Very nice they were for tea with vinegar and pepper garnish and fresh white bread from Spurgeons Bakery at the village shop.

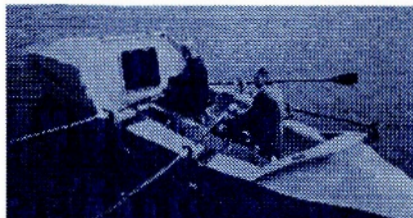
So came November 1937 when I left school to join the Navy, returning various times on leave but not for any continuous period until 1962. What happened after that is a subject for further reminiscences at a later date perhaps.

Jim Turner

River Jottings

Robertson's of Woodbridge obtained an unusual order from a Welsh customer, David Rice, ex-Royal Marine and SBS, who runs a management and outdoor training operation in Wales. He has also competed in the 1988 Carlsberg Single-handed Transatlantic Race and two Round Britain and Ireland Races. Now he is entering for the Atlantic Rowing Race organised by Chay Blyth, and starting in September 1997. The distance is approximately 3,000 miles and it should take about 70 days. Each boat will have a crew of two, and David is taking his wife Nadia, at present the only woman in the race. David's brother, Peter, had his own boat *La Gamine* built at Robertsons and recommended them. The new rowing boat is 7m (23 ft) and is built of 8mm. ply, epoxy treated and of tremendously strong construction. All the component parts were laser cut, and then assembled by the yard to its usual meticulous standards. The photo shows her being launched at the end of April with the owner David Rice on the left and Mike Clark, who did most of the

construction, on the right.



For some time, those concerned with safety at night have been pushing for traffic and/or navigation lights at the mouth of the River Deben - this Association amongst them. At last, success at Bawdsey where good old fashioned street lights have been installed. As street lights are a County matter, the Transport Committee Chairman, Peter Monk, was happy to persuade those who could do something - e.g. the owner of Bawdsey Manor, Neil Toetcher (home of Alexander's International School), the electricity board and the County authorities to get their act together and get it done. On the Ferry side, there is no progress. Trinity House says that it is out of their remit as we are lucky to have an offing buoy supplied and maintained by them. The simple solution acceptable to most would be two red vertical lights on the end of the groyne between the Sailing Club and the ferry jetty. This Association would encourage and support any solution acceptable to those concerned. Suggestions would be welcome.

How fortunate we are to have a Harbourmaster at Ramsholt such as George Collins. Young, old, in a hurry or in need of help, he is always there to assist with a dinghy, mooring or just giving advice. He is also a well equipped communicator, listening as he does to channel 37 and 80, and he has his own mobile 0850-340-352. He always seems able to find you a mooring, and he is happy for you to phone well in advance to make life easier for all

River Deben Association News Letter - Autumn 1996

parties.

The sea defences between Bawdsey and Hollesley are in a poor state, particularly at the East Lane promontory which was built as a land defence by the Quilters some 70 years ago. Considerable damage was done last winter, and the point might well disappear this winter unless urgent work is done this September to protect some 1000 acres and the properties at Shingle Street. The plan is that 10,000 tons of rock will be delivered by road and deposited to maintain the present position in the short term. Meanwhile a major study of the problem is being carried out, and we welcome this. For the future, there are likely to be some contentious cases as benign neglect is likely to be the order of the day unless there is a demonstrable requirement to spend significant sums on repair or reconstruction to protect lives, property and land. When it happens, it will be painful for those involved, but, in geographical terms, inevitable.

Felixstowe Ferry once again suffers from the irresponsible behaviour of a relatively few water and jet skiers. The water Ski club

is now well established but can only control its own members. Many water skiing areas are being established, particularly inland in Essex. Jet skiers are worse off as few want them and they are banned from many areas. The result is that a number of them come with all their equipment to Felixstowe Ferry in the hope that they can quietly launch their boats without paying the appropriate fee. This aggravates the car and boat parking problem which is always difficult there, quite apart from dangerous behaviour in a congested area at week-ends and holidays when powered watercraft abound. The problem is not going to go away. Suffolk Coastal District Council have a Recreation Forum which is getting its act together, aware that these craft are going to cause endless problems until they are established in some way by existing bylaws or extensions of them. Some other Councils seem to manage it. Felixstowe Town Council have prepared an interesting paper on Coastal Recreation Management, and the Coastal Forum has set up a working group to try and get effective action soonest, and certainly by next year. This Association is represented on it.

Ian Battye.

RIVER DEBEN ASSOCIATION Open Meeting

At 7:30pm on Friday, 18th October 1996 at the Woodbridge Community Hall.

ASSOCIATION BUSINESS

The Chairman will report and invite comments on the work of the Association.

INTERVAL

Tea, coffee and biscuits will be available.

SPEAKER:

A speaker from the National Rivers Authority will give a talk on:-
"Water Quality in the River Deben"

Everyone Welcome

Members are Encouraged to attend and bring guests